

STOLEN VALOR: THE PEOPLE WHO COMMIT MILITARY IMPERSONATION

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology

Sam Houston State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Elishewah Rosa Weisz

December, 2016

STOLEN VALOR: THE PEOPLE WHO COMMIT MILITARY IMPERSONATION

by

Elishewah Rosa Weisz

APPROVED:

Mitchel P. Roth, PhD
Dissertation Director

Steven Cuvelier, PhD
Committee Member

Willard Oliver, PhD
Committee Member

Phillip Lyons, PhD
Dean, College of Criminal Justice

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my awesome husband, Marcelino Avelar II, to all the other real veterans for their service and the people fighting for the honor of those have served.

And to my grandfather, Samu Zwi Weisz, who leads me on my path of knowledge.

ABSTRACT

Weisz, Elishewah Rosa, *Stolen Valor: The people who commit military impersonation*. Doctor of Philosophy (Criminal Justice), December, 2016, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Stolen valor, or falsely claiming to have performed military service or claiming to have served in a different capacity than actually occurred, seems to be a growing problem in society. With the five branches (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Air Force), and large amount of awards, the United States has created a large amount of confusion when it comes to military service. Even so, very little is known about the people who commit stolen valor and the financial crimes they commit. The current study is meant to lay a foundation for future research on the topic.

The current study created a database from publically available online data on stolen valor offenders. The website used for analysis contained the cases of 68 people who have been outed for having falsified their military history. To analyze their stories content analysis was used. The current study's findings suggest, although the results are not generalizable, that many people who have served in the military may falsify their military history. Furthermore, many of the offenders have a criminal record detailing their generalist criminal tendencies. There are many more characteristics which were found to be relevant to these offenders.

As this is the first scholarly study on the topic, not including legal papers pertaining to the Stolen Valor Act of 2005, many more questions need answering. Better and more data can allow for better policy to be created. Even so, there are some recommendation based on the current sample. First more information needs to be available to the general public concerning the military awards and regulations. Also, a

database containing basic data of people who have served should be available to the public so if a person makes a claim of military service, it can be checked in a decent time frame. Likewise, certain disorders seem to be used more often than other disorders to gain financial benefits. Better recognition of these disorders and research into them may be necessary to decrease the amount of fraud committed.

KEY WORDS: Stolen valor, Fraud, Military impersonation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a few people who have been instrumental in the development and whose assistance has been invaluable in the creation of this dissertation. First, my husband, Marcelino Avelar II, without whom this dissertation would not have happened. His military knowledge has made this dissertation a great deal more informative than it would have been without him. His encouragement was unwavering throughout the whole long process of brainstorming about a topic, literature research, data collection and analysis, and the final write up.

Secondly, I would also like to thank my dissertation committee members. Dr. Mitchel P. Roth who chaired the committee, and gave me many research opportunities, as well as teaching opportunities. Dr. Steven Cuvelier for his guidance on this project. Dr. Willard Oliver for his statistical assistance and knowledge as well as his military knowledge.

Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Yudu Li for the many scholarly arguments we shared. Dr. Rolando del Carmen has been of great assistance with his legal knowledge and his encouragement for legal scholarship. As well as my parents who supported me in my choice to pursue a doctoral degree. Lastly, the people behind the Guardian of Valor website. This website made it much easier to collect data on people who impersonate military personnel. Their hard work to restore military honor which was taken by these impersonators is admirable.

PREFACE

This dissertation concerns stolen valor, better known as military impersonation. When I started thinking about a dissertation topic, I had a hard time coming up with an interesting topic. That was until my husband, a Marine Corps veteran, showed me video clips and articles about military impersonators. This led to questions, many, many questions about why people lie or embellish their military service. During the literature search it became clear that there was very little academic data available concerning this topic. The little that was available was of a legal nature and did not answer many questions about this group of people. The current study was an attempt to increase the scholarly knowledge about this group of people. This knowledge is important as more and more often the Veterans Affairs, state government, charities, and private citizens seem to be the victims of military impersonators and the fraud they commit. To curtail this behavior, statutes have been enacted, which in some cases have had implications for the impersonators' constitutional rights.

A need for more knowledge is warranted as there is so little, while the acts cause so much pain to so many people. At the same time statutes have been enacted without knowledge of the basic characteristics of these deceivers. This dissertation is a study of a small sample of military impersonators and hopes to shed some light on the topic. Keep in mind though that this sample is not a random sample and therefore the findings cannot be generalized to the whole military impersonator population. Even so, much information can be gained from the current study. Please enjoy the long journey through this dissertation going from history and the awards system, through the current legal consequences for committing stolen valor in the United States, and through the

psychological potential explanations for the behavior. Then comes the current study, the methods section, the findings, and the discussion section which includes policy implications and recommendations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
PREFACE	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND	1
Background	2
Military awards system history	8
II LEGAL ASPECTS OF IMPERSONATING MILITARY PERSONNEL	15
Federal laws	17
State Laws	22
The use of military service as a defense in crime	31
III REASONS FOR MILITARY IMPERSONATION, THE SOCIETAL RESPONSE, AND THE SYSTEM	33
Psychological explanations	35
Fraud	49
Societal Response to Military Impersonation	57
The System	62

IV METHODS	70
The current study	70
Research questions.....	70
Analytic strategy and sample	71
V FINDINGS	82
Demographic data	82
Online & crime variables availability	83
Military variables	88
VI DISCUSSION	108
Summary of findings.....	108
Policy implications and recommendations	115
Limitations	124
Future research.....	125
Conclusion	127
REFERENCES	129
APPENDIX A.....	154
APPENDIX B	157
APPENDIX C	158
APPENDIX D.....	162
APPENDIX E	163
APPENDIX F.....	166
APPENDIX G.....	167
APPENDIX H.....	172

APPENDIX I	191
APPENDIX J	196
APPENDIX K.....	199
APPENDIX L	200
VITA.....	201

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Federal cases on stolen valor.	23
2 States and stolen valor related statutes, and bills.	25
3 Variables used in the current study	78
4 Other crimes committed by military impersonators	86
5 Stolen valor sentences	88
6 Actual branch versus fictitious branch.....	92
7 Real paygrade versus fictitious paygrades.....	93

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 The content analysis process.....	73

CHAPTER I

Introduction & Background

Stories concerning people who pretend to be CIA spies, Navy SEALs, Special Forces, and military award winners abound (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). Just a cursory search on Google for the term “stolen valor” amounts to 469,000 results, the term military imposter will net a result of 455,000, CIA imposter nets 123,000 hits, and Navy SEAL imposter finds 38,800 hits (on March 22, 2016). Pretending to be someone other than who a person is, is fairly common, whether it be pretending to be a CIA agent (Inskeep, 2009), a high formally educated person (Lewin, 2007), or even an Auschwitz survivor (“Pennsylvania Man Admits,” 2016). These examples show a need for imposters to be thought of as good respectable people with exciting employment and/or life experiences. People pad resumes, and misrepresent or blatantly lie about their experiences, all to look better than they are in reality and to receive better opportunities for instance for employment than they would have received without the misrepresentations.

This happens in the military as well. The U.S. military is a volunteer military and many people who join do so with the intent to make the military their career. To climb the military hierarchy, it is helpful to attend certain military occupation schools and to earn certain awards, such as a Combat Action Ribbon or a Combat Infantryman’s Badge¹. An example where people tried to obtain a combat decoration to further their career is explained by Major Winters (Winters & Kingseed, 2006) in his memoirs. Several officers

¹ The Combat Action Ribbon is the Marine Corps, Navy, and Coast Guard version, while the Combat Infantryman’s Badge, Combat Medical Badge, Combat Action Badge are the Army versions, and the Air Force Combat Action Medal is the Air Force version of the decoration which states that the wearer has combat experience.

joined Easy Company during WWII in Europe and were eager to earn the combat decorations. One officer was hurt on his first mission, while another officer was killed along with the rest of his patrol on his first patrol, at the same time the awards counted toward being able to depart Europe earlier at the end of the war (Winters & Kingseed, 2006). People with more decorations have also been granted other advancements in civilian life, such as Audie Murphy who started a movie career as an actor after his military service. Military decorations can therefore be similarly valued as college degrees for career advancement and success in life.

Fraud committed to make oneself look better, for example by embellishing educational degrees attained, to increase one's opportunities in society may be fairly common. The Bureau of Justice Statistics defines fraud (Fraud, 2009) as

The intentional misrepresentation of information or identity to deceive others, the unlawful use of a credit card or ATM, or the use of electronic means to transmit deceptive information, in order to obtain money or other things of value. Fraud may be committed by someone inside or outside the business. Includes instances in which a computer was used to defraud the business of money, property, financial documents, insurance policies, deeds, use of rental cars, or various services by forgery, misrepresented identity, credit card or wire fraud. Excludes incidents of embezzlement.

One special kind of fraud relates to people misrepresenting their military service.

Background

In America, one way to be considered a good respectable person and to have increased opportunities available is to serve in the military. Honorably serving grants

people not only respect in the community, but also benefits. Some of these advantages are having college paid for, other financial benefits (e.g., loans), medical treatment through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015), and better employment opportunities in the civilian world where some companies make it a point to hire veterans over non-veterans (see for example J.P. Morgan Chase²).

Increased opportunities, respect and admiration, as well as financial benefits are some reasons for people to embellish their service and for others to completely make up a service history. It may not be hard to understand why someone would embellish or completely fake their military career, especially when the amount of military related books and movies, as well as the level of patriotism today, are taken into account. Some examples of veterans who have written books are Marina Yurlova (Yurlova, 1934/2010) about her experiences fighting in World War I, Brad Kasal about his experiences in Fallujah (Kasal & Helms, 2007), Chris Kyle³ about his experiences as a Navy SEAL sniper in Iraq (Kyle, DeFelice, & McEwen, 2012), Marcus Luttrell about his experiences as a Navy SEAL in Afghanistan (Luttrell & Robinson, 2007), and E.B. Sledge about his experiences as a U.S. Marine in the Pacific theatre in WWII (Sledge, 1981/2010). Books made into movies include Chris Kyle's *American Sniper* (Eastwood, et al, 2014), and Marcus Luttrell's *Lone Survivor* (Berg, et al., 2013). E.B. Sledge's book was one of the books which inspired Ambrose's book as well as the television mini-series *The Pacific*

² See for example <https://www.chase.com/online/military/military-jobs.htm>

³ It came out during the writing of this dissertation that there are allegations that Chris Kyle may have embellished the amount of awards he received during his service. See <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2016/05/25/chris-kyle-american-sniper-navy-medals/84932154/>

(Ambrose, 2011; HBO, 2010). Successful books and/ or movies and the financial profits that come with it are great incentives for lying and/ or embellishing.

Impersonating military personnel is termed “stolen valor” in the United States (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). The term was coined by B.G. Burkett in the book he co-authored with Whitley (1998) concerning the topic with the same title. Even though the term may be relatively new, the behavior is not. There are stories about people lying about their service in the Civil War (Stern, Stern, & Mink, 2014 [chapter 7]), World War II (Artz, 2015; Noyes, 2015), the Korean War (Stern, Stern, & Mink, 2014), and pretending to have fought in Vietnam (Davis, 2015; Frueh et al., 2005, Rowland, 2015). As well as ‘upgrading’ the branch to one with more combat engagements if they have served (Mara, 2015). Likewise, stolen valor is not a uniquely American issue. Other countries impacted are: Great Britain, where the imposters are called Walter Mittys (Shute, 2015) after James Thurber’s fictional character who imagines himself to be many different roles such as a surgeon and a military pilot, Australia and New Zealand (Dalton, 2013), and Canada (Macalpine, 2014).

Not only do people who have never served lie about military service, so do veterans and in some cases active duty personnel (Burkett, & Whitley, 1998; Rowland, 2015). Three examples of these groups are Kelsie Hoover, Damian Barbee, and Joseph Ellis. These examples show some of the widely different circumstances under which stolen valor occurs. Kelsie Hoover is an example of a person who has never served, but pretended to be a soldier. Kelsie took her ‘brother’s’ (who was also a figment of her imagination) driver’s license and even went so far as to cut off most of her hair to look like a male soldier. She pretended to have been shot in Afghanistan and it was later

uncovered she had a history of committing fraud (*'Kelsie Hoover'*, n.d.). Damian Barbee is an example of a soldier who lied about his military accomplishments while on active duty. He greatly exaggerated the awards and badges he had earned and when the truth came to light he was court-martialed and sentenced to three months of hard labor and a reduction in rank (Rowland, 2015). Joseph Ellis was a Pulitzer prize winning writer and historian. He told stories to journalists and students alike of serving in Vietnam as well as serving under General Westmoreland. Ellis had served in the military, but had not actually served in Vietnam. During the period he stated he spent in Vietnam he actually was teaching history at West Point (Maslan, 2006).

The consequences of military impersonation for active duty personnel versus people who are not currently serving is very different. Military personnel are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), while veterans and people who have not served at all are subject to civilian federal law as well as state laws. The punishments can be severe under the UCMJ, ranging from dishonorable discharge and forfeiture of all pay and allowances and confinement for three years to a bad-conduct discharge and forfeiture of all pay and allowances and a six-month confinement. Under Federal law stolen valor is considered a misdemeanor punished by a not more than one year of county jail and a fine.

Another profession which attracts imposters is the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Sterner, Sterner, & Mink, 2014). CIA agents are often considered the "Navy SEALs of the civilian world", as both professions are performed under highly secretive circumstances (which benefits the impersonator) and the stories which have been publicized show both professions performing very extraordinary tasks. The exciting image that being employed by the CIA has garnered in popular media, may

therefore be the same motivation as used by people who pretend to be Special Forces or Navy SEALs. This kind of employment sounds better than anything mundane the imposters may have accomplished in real life. Such employment may also come with increased attention and admiration from people (Delmore, 2013). One CIA impersonator stated his reasons for doing so as “greed – simple greed” and “a sense of excitement” as well as stating “it was something like an addiction” (as cited in Delmore, 2013). Besides attention, fraud may be as relevant here as it is for military imposters, as evidenced by the Simmons case, where Wayne Simmons pretended to be a CIA operative to receive a security clearance for increased employment opportunities (Taylor, 2015).

A further profession with its fair share of imposters is law enforcement. Attention and greed are relevant motivations here as they are for CIA and military impersonators. Financial benefits, for example the professional courtesy between agencies which allows law enforcement officers to get away with minor traffic related fines, can prove too difficult to resist for non-law enforcement officers (Palazzolo, 2012). Impersonation of federal, state, and local employees may therefore be a large problem. However, there are some unique challenges related to military impersonation which are either not relevant or barely relevant to impersonating other professions.

Enlisting in the military provides the enlistee with certain benefits. An honorable discharge does not end the benefits; it adds new veteran benefits to the mix. The government’s incentives to increase enlistment after the United States military became a volunteer military in 1973 (Bouffard, 2005; MacLean & Elder, 2007; Selective Service System, 2002), also increased the likelihood of fraud being committed to receive these benefits. Such as the Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation for Post-Traumatic Stress

Disorder (PTSD) related disability can be in the thousands of dollars per year (Frueh, et al., 2005), which makes the VA disability a target for fraud.

Fabricating or embellishing a military history for financial gain is not limited to the lower socio-economic stratum. Several people who have been caught faking or embellishing their military records were respected and successful individuals, including a judge, a Pulitzer Prize winner (Landphair, 2011), a state lawmaker (Washington state lawmaker, 2016), and an eminent historian (Maslan, 2006).

Although often considered a victimless crime (Burkett & Whitley, 1998), the consequences of stolen valor can be great and have consequences for victims. The ramifications impact several aspects, financial losses, loss of trust in the government, society, or in other people, and for the culprits, incarceration and other punishments, as well as embarrassment. The humiliation is not limited to the offenders, their families may be equally mortified by the lies. In some cases the offender may feel so extremely disgraced that the only way out of the situation is suicide as happened in the case of Admiral Jeremy Boorda (Rowland, 2015). Admiral Boorda was serving in the Navy when he was caught wearing Bronze stars with “V” devices (which indicate the awards were earned during combat), while not having earned the “V” devices. He had earned the Bronze Stars. In his suicide note he stated that he had made an innocent mistake (Rowland, 2015).

In another example where stolen valor clearly is not a victimless crime concerns the impersonation of military not for fraud, but for terrorism and/ or (psychological) warfare. Dressing in the uniform of the opposite side can aid one to get access to areas that otherwise would be restricted to the terrorist and allow them to attack the other side

or to create propaganda. However, stolen valor for terroristic and propaganda purposes is not the focus of this dissertation and will therefore not be discussed any further.

The academic research concerning this topic is scarce. What is available is generally legal research concerning the constitutionality of the Stolen Valor Act of 2005, which made simply stating service when one had not served illegal. The constitutionality of the 2005 act was challenged on First Amendment grounds. The social sciences lack research concerning this topic. This may in part be due to the fact that many people perceive stolen valor as a victimless crime and therefore put less effort toward researching it than if it was not considered a victimless crime. Additionally, it was only recently, over the last few decades, that the legality of making false statements about military service has come into question. Wearing military awards, especially the valor awards among which the Congressional Medal of Honor (MOH), that have not been earned has been illegal for longer. However, with the numerous different awards available for all five military branches, it is not difficult to impersonate a Medal of Honor recipient. In the next section the military awards system history will be reviewed.

Military awards system history

A military awards system⁴ was instituted several years after the birth of the United States when General George Washington created the first medal in 1782 (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Sterner, Sterner, & Mink, 2014; The Badge of Military Merit, 2010; The Purple Heart, n.d.). This award, also called the Purple Heart, was awarded for “Not only instances of unusual gallantry, but also of extraordinary fidelity and essential service

⁴ For the military award pyramid see Appendices 1-4. These appendices contain not only the personal awards mentioned above, but also unit awards, campaign & service awards, Service & Training awards, and Marksmanship awards.

in any way” (The Purple Heart, n.d.). This medal has only been awarded to three people⁵, after which the award was ignored until 1927 when reinstatement was proposed by General Charles P. Summerall (The Badge of Military Merit, 2010).

George Washington realized that if an award with benefits attached to it is awarded, some people are likely to try to take advantage of the bestowment of this honor. Washington ordered a book be kept containing all the recipients of the award, acknowledging the need for a military awards database. Washington also stated that punishment is warranted for people who have taken advantage of the award benefits while not having earned it (Sterner, Sterner, & Mink, 2014; The Purple Heart, n.d.).

During the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), a Certificate of Merit was awarded for heroic service (Sterner, Sterner, & Mink, 2014). In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln instated the Medal of Honor (MoH) when he signed it into law (Department of Defense, n.d.). In 1863, the MoH was awarded for the first time (Burrelli & Salazar Torreon, 2014). In the awards early days there may have been some wrong decisions when it comes to who should receive the award. This is why a board was created for the investigation of the awarding of the MoH and found that 911 people had received the award when they were not eligible for it (Burrelli & Salazar Torreon, 2014). These medals were rescinded. However, it is possible to appeal a rescinding decision (Burrelli & Salazar Torreon, 2014), which occurred in the case of the only female recipient, Mary Edwards Walker, a civilian surgeon attached to the army during the Civil War (Burrelli & Salazar Torreon, 2014). The Medal of Honor is the only military award which has a complete database of recipients. This data base is maintained by the Congressional Medal

⁵ Sergeant Daniel Bissell, Sergeant, William Brown, and Sergeant Elijah Churchill (The Badge of Military Merit, 2010; The Purple Heart, n.d.)

of Honor Society⁶. According to Burrelli and Salazar Torreon (2014) it is important to have a good database since there are privileges involved with receiving the MoH.

The privileges awarded to MoH recipients are the following: (1) A monthly pension from the Department of Veterans Affairs, (2) An increase in retirement pay (if they retire from the military), (3) Travel on military air transportation when space is available, (4) MoH recipients can wear their uniform whenever and wherever they choose, (5) Receipt of a Department of Defense Identification card which allows for to use the military commissary theater privileges, and post exchange after separating from the military (but not as a retiree), (6) The children of MoH recipients can attend a military college of their choosing if they qualify, (7) Attend Presidential inaugurations, (8) a specialized headstone for deceased MoH recipients, and lastly (9) the on-base billeting should be similar to what the prestige of the MoH represents (Burrelli & Salazar Torreon, 2014).

In 1917-1918, the need for a military Pyramid of Honor was recognized by U.S. Congress and so a Pyramid of Honor was instated. This pyramid added several new medals to the military awards system (Sterner, Sterner, & Mink, 2014). All the awards included in the pyramid at this time were awarded for heroism, but in descending levels of heroism. Congress approved the establishment of the Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Medal, and the Navy Cross in 1919 (An Act to provide, 1919). The MoH is the highest award. Directly below the MoH were the Army's Distinguished Service Cross and the Navy's Distinguished Service Medal. This level was followed by the Army Distinguished Service Medal and the Navy Cross. The Navy reversed the

⁶ The database can be found at: <http://www.cmohs.org/recipient-archive.php>

Awards from level two and three to coincide with the Army's medals. This makes the Cross awards the second highest awards, while the Distinguished Service Medals are one level lower. The last level at this time was the Army Citation Star. This last award was turned into the Silver Star Medal after World War I (Stern, Stern, & Mink, 2014).

George Washington's medal was reintroduced in 1932 by General Douglas MacArthur Jr., as the Purple Heart (Burrelli, 2012; The Badge of Military Merit, 2010; The Purple Heart, n.d.) with a new design by John R. Sinnock (The Badge of Military Merit, 2010), based on the original. The reason for awarding the Purple Heart had changed from George Washington's original meaning to being awarded for being wounded (which included the need for treatment by a medical officer) or killed in action with an enemy (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Burrelli, 2012; Stern, Stern, & Mink, 2014). However, the Purple Heart was primarily an Army award until President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942 adjusted it to include all of the military branches (The Purple Heart, n.d.). The authorization for being awarded this medal was retroactive from December 7, 1941 (The Purple Heart, n.d.), or the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. President Harry S. Truman extended the eligibility for the Purple Heart to include World War I service, starting April 5, 1917 (The Purple Heart, n.d.). President John F. Kennedy extended eligibility to civilians who served with the Armed Forces in 1962, while President Ronald Reagan extended the eligibility to include the people who were killed or wounded in terrorist attacks or while serving as peace keeping forces. In 1998, the National Defense Authorization Act removed civilians from eligibility for the Purple Heart, returning it to its military exclusivity (The Purple Heart, n.d.). The Purple Heart is ranked beneath the Bronze Star Medal (The Badge of Military Merit, 2010).

In 1942, the Legion of Merit was created through Executive Order 9260 (1942) by President Roosevelt. This medal is awarded to individuals who “shall have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services” (Executive Order 9260, 1942; Executive Order 10600, 1955) for actions dating back to September 8, 1939. The Legion of Merit award can also be awarded to foreigners (Executive Order 9260, 1942; Executive Order 10600, 1955). President Eisenhower made some amendments to this award in who can propose the award to the President and adding different degrees of Legion of Merits for foreigners (Chief Commander, Commander, Officer, and Legionnaire) (Executive Order 10600, 1955).

In 1944, the Bronze Star Medal (BSM) was created through Executive Order 9419 (1944) by President Roosevelt after being conceived by Colonel Russell P. Reeder in 1943 (ashmccall, 2014). The BSM was to be awarded to “... any person who, while serving in any capacity in or with the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard of the United States on or after December 7, 1941, distinguishes, or has distinguished, himself by heroic or meritorious achievement or service, not involving participation in aerial flight, in connection with military or naval operations against an enemy of the United States” (Executive Order 9419, 1944). The Air Force personnel were excluded from receiving the BSM because the Air Force already had the Air Medal. To aid the morale of the people who served on the ground Colonel Reeder felt it necessary to instate another award which he proposed to call the “Ground Medal” which became the BSM (ashmccall, 2014).

The BSM can be awarded posthumously (ashmccall, 2014; Executive Order 9419, 1944; Executive Order 11046, 1962) and a person can receive more than one BSM,

however, for the first time an actual medal is awarded while for any subsequent BSM's no medal is awarded. Instead of a medal a device is added to the first BSM for every subsequent BSM awarded (Executive Order 9419, 1944; Executive Order 11046, 1962). The text of the both Executive Order 9419 (1944) and Executive Order 11046 (1962) state that 'any person' can receive the BSM, provided that they serve with the United States. This allows for the awarding of the BSM to foreigners, not just to American personnel (ashmccall, 2014).

President Kennedy made changes to the awarding process for the Bronze Star Medal in Executive Order 11046 (1962). The ground personnel of the Air Force were included and the actions are not limited to actions "... in connection with military or naval operations against an enemy of the United States" (Executive Order 9419, 1944). President Kennedy broadened this to include actions '... (a) while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States, (b) while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing force; or (c) while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not belligerent party' (Executive Order 11046, 1962).

In 1976, The Defense Superior Service Medal (DSSM) was enacted through Executive Order 11904 (1976) by President Ford (U.S. Air Force, n.d.). This medal is awarded "... to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who has rendered superior meritorious service in a position of significant responsibility with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Organization or the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a specified or unified command, a Defense agency, or such other joint activity as may be designated by

the Secretary of Defense” (Executive Order 11904). This award falls in between the Silver Star medal and the Legion of Merit in importance (Executive Order 11904).

Awarding of the different medals has not been consistent over time and over conflicts. Since the Korean War in the 1950s, the amount of awards bestowed on military personnel has decreased (Chollet, 2014). This applies at least to the three highest valor awards: the MoH, the service crosses, and the Silver Star (Awards and decorations, 2016; Chollet, 2014). With the amount of awards conferred decreasing and an increase in appreciation of the military since the September 11, 2001 attacks and a perceived increase in stolen valor cases, it is important to understand the legality related to impersonating a military hero. For an overview of military awards see Appendices A-D.

The next chapter covers the federal, state, and a selection of international statutes concerning stolen valor. Chapter three examines the reasons for impersonation, the societal response to stolen valor cases, and the system and whether it facilitates stolen valor or counters it. Chapter four describes the current study and the methods used for the research analysis. Chapter five outlines the results, and chapter six will review the conclusions and the policy implications of the current study.

CHAPTER II

Legal Aspects of Impersonating Military Personnel

Deception has for millennia been a moral and a legal challenge (Bond & DePaulo, 2006). There are two sides to impersonation and deception. On one side protecting people from deception and any problems caused by the deception. On the other side, freedom of speech which is protected by the U.S. in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Since freedom of speech is guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution, it needs to be adhered to by federal and state statutes.

The First Amendment states

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

This makes the freedom of speech and freedom of expression very relevant when it comes to impersonation and deception in general and military impersonation and deception in particular. It is this amendment to which the new statutes are measured. Although speech is protected, this protection does not apply to all speech (Baker, 2012; Davis, 2008). Several categories are not protected (Gal, 2011). These categories are “(1) advocacy to incite and likely to incite imminent lawless action; (2) obscenity; (3) defamation of ordinary folks; (4) speech integral to criminal conduct; (5) fighting words; (6) child pornography; (7) fraud; (8) threats to kill or inflict injury on the President of the United States; and (9) speech creating grave and imminent threat the government has the power to prevent (Schoen & Falcheck, 2014. pp.283-284; Smith, 2012; *United States v.*

Alvarez, 2012). If the speech does not fit in one of the unprotected categories, the U.S. Supreme Court can create a new category although they are very hesitant to add categories (Calvert & Rich, 2010) which increase the government power and decrease citizen protections (Gal, 2011). Therefore, if anybody makes a statement which threatens a person or groups lives and provokes immediate violence, this statement is not protected by the First Amendment (Davis, 2008). So how about lying? Since it is inevitable for an open society with differing opinions to penalize all false statements, in both the public and private spheres, it is necessary to protect even false statements under the First Amendment (*United States v. Alvarez, 2012*). This applies to military deception as well; it cannot be punished solely on the basis of an offender lying (Gal, 2011; Schoen & Falcheck, 2014; *United States v. Alvarez, 2012*; Valkenaar, 2013).

To decide whether speech is or is not protected by the First Amendment several factors are relevant. First is the type of speech. The government cannot ban all speech or specific types of speech. It depends on the type of speech the government wants to ban. There are content-based and content neutral speech restrictions. The government can restrict certain speech based on the specific content only if there is a significant government interest (Baker, 2012). Content-neutral speech, however, restricts general speech as long as it is tailored to a specific time, location, and manner of speech. The government also needs to provide a significant government interest and must narrow the restriction.

The restriction must pass the strict scrutiny test set by the courts (Valkenaar, 2013). This means that the government needs to prove that there is a compelling government interest for which the statute needs to be enacted and the speech needs to be

restricted (Valkenaar, 2013). For example, the government has a compelling stake in restricting speech on the basis of incitement to violence. However, the same may not be true for military deception. After the enactment of the Stolen Valor Act of 2005, there were appeals based on constitutional challenges to the statute. (More on the Stolen Valor Act can be found in the section with the same title.) This chapter has been divided into three categories. It starts with the federal statutes and cases, followed by the state statutes, and then by military service as a legal defense as it pertains to stolen valor.

Federal laws

Federal statutes apply in two different ways to military impersonation, depending on whether one is serving in the Armed Forces or not. For active duty personnel, pretending to have earned a higher rank and/or feigning higher or more decorations than he or she have actually been awarded leads to military prosecution as the regular civilian federal statutes do not apply to military personnel. The military statutes are called the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). After someone has left the military or if the person has never served at all, regular civilian federal statutes apply instead. This section first deals with active duty impersonations, then the laws concerning veterans and the people who have never served in the Armed Forces will be discussed.

Uniform Code of Military Justice and active duty military. People doing military service are generally under the jurisdiction of a separate justice code. In the U.S. the military code is the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), codified in Title 10 U.S.C. Armed forces. The UCMJ (see Appendix F) contains several articles that are relevant to stolen valor during military service. Falsifying any documents and/or statements while knowing that the information is false, with an intent to deceive, can lead

to the offender being court-martialed (UCMJ 107, 10 U.S.C. 907, 1956). A court-martial also occurs when military personnel commits fraud against the U.S. (UCMJ 132, 10 U.S.C. 932, 1956). In addition, destroying, selling, disposal, damaging, loss, or neglect of any military property (UCMJ 108, 10 U.S.C. 908, 1956) can lead to a court-martial. Article 134 (10 U.S.C. 934) is a general article which penalizes a wide variety of conduct, impersonating an officer (whether commissioned, noncommissioned, or warrant) being one of the acts punished. These laws only apply to people while they are under the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces, otherwise, civilian federal law applies. The following section covers civilian federal laws concerning stolen valor.

Civilian federal laws covering people not under military jurisdiction. Several civilian laws apply to instances of stolen valor. Before the enactment of the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 there were several statutes on the books which could be used to try people who have lied about their military service (see Appendix G). There are codes stating who is authorized to wear the military uniform (10 U.S.C. 771, 1956). With few exceptions (e.g., actors; 10 U.S.C. 772, 1956/ 1996), only members of the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marine Corps are authorized to wear their respective uniforms or distinctive parts of their uniforms. There are current rules to regulate what is called frocking, or allowing a person to wear the insignia from the next rank up before the promotion has officially been processed (10 U.S.C. 777, 1996/2011; 10 U.S.C. 777a, 2011). Two articles that bear further explanation are the impersonation of an officer of the U.S. (18 U.S.C. §912) statute and the second is the predecessor to the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 (18 U.S.C. §704).

U.S. officer impersonation. It is illegal for people to impersonate a United States federal officer. Although this statute is not specific to the military, it does include some behavior that falls under military impersonation. The statute (18 U.S.C. §912, 2006) prohibits the false impersonation and acting under the false assumption of a U.S. government employee. This statute was used sparingly prior to the creation of a specific military deception statute (Valkenaar, 2013). Another statute relevant to impersonation is 18 U.S.C. §702 (1994), or the Uniform of Armed Forces and Public Health Service Statute. This law states that people who are not authorized to wear a military uniform or part of a military uniform can be fined and/or imprisoned not more than six months. There are few exceptions to this law, among them are television and movie actors (10 U.S.C. 772, 1956/1996). This legal exception stated that an actor was only authorized to wear the military uniform if the actor would not portray the military in a negative light. This section of the law was found to be unconstitutional in *Schacht v. United States* (1970). The court stated that allowing actors to wear a military uniform while portraying the military in a negative light is constitutionally protected.

Predecessor to Stolen Valor Act of 2005. Act 18 U.S.C. §704 was used prior to the creation of the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 with only few changes over the many decades it was in existence. The Military medals or decorations statute (18 U.S.C. §704, 2003) prohibited the wearing, creation, and sale of military decorations, with a greater sentence for when the same actions occur with the Congressional Medal of Honor. The wearing, manufacturing, or selling of any decoration or medal which was created by Congress for use by the Armed Forces was, therefore, illegal. This act was considered too

narrow of an approach in addressing the military deception problem, thus the broader Stolen Valor Act of 2005 was enacted (Valkenaar, 2013).

Stolen Valor Act of 2005. Due to the perceived narrowness of the initial law to prosecute military deception, and a perceived⁷ increase in stolen valor cases (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Sterner, Sterner, & Mink, 2014) a newer statute was passed, the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 (18 U.S.C. §704, 2006). The old statute was completely based on actions and behaviors (e.g., selling, manufacturing, or wearing). It differed from the new Act of 2005, which includes penalizing statements concerning military deception (Holzer & Holzer, 2012). Under the 2005 Act several people were prosecuted. The first person prosecuted and convicted (through a plea deal) was Louis Lowell McGuinn, (aka Lowell Craig McGuinn) in 2007. McGuinn argued that the statute was overly broad and vague and therefor the Stolen Valor Act was unconstitutional and his conviction should be vacated (*U.S. v. McGuinn*, 2007). The court disagreed and McGuinn's conviction stood (Sterner, Sterner, & Mink, 2014; *U.S. v. McGuinn*, 2007). The Circuit court judges in the Strandlof case (*United States v. Strandlof*, 2012) came to the same conclusion when the case was appealed, holding that there is no constitutional problem with the 2005 Act. This changed in the *United States v. Alvarez* [567 U.S. ____ (2012)] case. Xavier Alvarez lied about having been a Marine and having been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. The truth was he had never served in the military (Smith, 2012; *United States v. Alvarez*, 2012). There were now several courts which came to different conclusions based

⁷ There is a perception in many publications that the amount of stolen valor cases has risen over the last couple of years. However, since there is no database or any other way to confirm this, it can only be called a perception. The perceived increase in cases can be due to an actual increase, or the popularization of the internet over the last two decades, making it easier to find people who fight stolen valor as well as publicize cases, for example.

on the same law (Lloyd-Jones, 2012; Smith, 2012). In this case the U.S. Supreme Court found that the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 was unconstitutional due to a violation of the First Amendment right to Freedom of Speech (Schoen & Falchek, 2014; *United States v. Alvarez*, 2012; Valkenaar, 2013). Other Stolen Valor convictions had to be set aside as well in 2012 (*United States v. Swisher*, 2016; Vaughn, 2012). This led to calls for the creation of a new constitutionally sound Stolen Valor Act (Lloyd-Jones, 2012) (for an overview of the federal cases see Table 1).

Stolen Valor Act of 2012. After having been declared too broad on the speech prohibition (*United States v. Alvarez*, 2012), a new, narrower stolen valor act was enacted in 2012 and passed by Congress in 2013 (H.R. 258, 2013). This version of the Stolen Valor Act is narrower in that it is limited to military impersonation with the “intent to obtain money property, or other tangible benefit” (H.R. 258, 2013) or committing fraud by pretending to have been awarded certain medals or awards (H.R. 258, 2013). By limiting the speech section from the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 in this way and adding that there has to be intent to commit fraud through deception the current Act is more difficult to challenge based on a First Amendment violation.

Fraud. As applicable to the military, fraud covers a broad category of crimes which contains military impersonation. The federal code has a whole chapter on fraud and false statements (18 U.S. C. chapter 47), with 40 statutes concerning different types of fraud, such as fraud with highway projects (§1020), and major fraud against the U.S. (§1031). In some cases, certain fraudulent behaviors can fall under more than one fraud statute (for example, identity theft through falsified official documents). Even though currently it is not illegal to lie about a person’s military history (as stated above, just

lying without a tangible benefit is protected by the First Amendment) financially benefitting from the lie is punishable. Gaining tangible benefits from military deception is considered fraud, and fraud is penalized under federal law (see 18 U.S.C. chapter 47). Generally, the term “tangible” is measured in monetary value.

It has become clear, however, that military fraud does not always lead to monetary benefits directly. For example, people have lied about being war heroes to obtain political appointments, business contracts, or employment (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). People have also forged government paperwork (for example DD-214) to obtain VA benefits that they were not entitled to (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). All of these examples can be prosecuted under existing fraud laws, moreover, the following are also punishable: Possession of false papers to defraud United States (18 U.S.C. §1002, 1994), Fraud and related activity in connection with identification documents, authentication features, and information (18 U.S.C. §1028, 2006), Major fraud against the United States (18 U.S.C. §1031, 2009), and False statements relating to health care matters (18 U.S.C. §1035, 1996) are applicable statutes relating to DD-214 forgeries, as well as, Veterans Affairs (VA) fraud.

State Laws

General review of military impersonation laws. Several states have enacted or are in the process of enacting statutes to make military impersonation and/or defrauding people based on the impersonation illegal (see Table 2). Illinois was the first state to enact a law outlawing false claims concerning military service (Stern, Stern, & Mink, 2014). To account for the following data, all the state statutes were searched and the

existing state statutes were retrieved for analysis. The states with no statute were searched for current bills pertaining to stolen valor. The following are the results.

Table 1

Federal cases on stolen valor.

Case	Court	Issue	Decision	Reason for decision
Schacht v. U.S. [398 U.S. 58 (1970)]	U.S. Supreme Court	Is it a violation of the First Amendment to allow actors to wear a military uniform only when the portrayal is positive toward the military?	Yes	The ban for non-military personnel to wear uniforms is constitutional. However, allowing exceptions for actors <u>only</u> if they portray the military in a <u>positive</u> light is a violation of free speech.
U.S. v. McGuinn [07Cr.471 (2007)]	U.S. District Court, S.D.N.Y.	Is the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 constitutional?	Yes	The statute is clear and does not allow for improper discretion by law enforcement.
U.S. v. Alvarez [2:07Cr.010 35 (2010)]	U.S. 9 th Circuit	Is lying about being awarded military medals constitutional?	No	The statute was too broad and would allow the government too much power to regulate false factual speech.
U.S. v. Strandlof [09Cr.497 (2012)]	U.S. 10 th Circuit	Is lying about being awarded military medals constitutional?	Yes	The statute criminalizing lying about military awards is clear and therefore constitutional.
U.S. v. Alvarez [567 U.S. ____ (2012)]	U.S. Supreme Court	Is lying about being awarded military medals constitutional?	No	The statute was too broad and the government did not have a significant interest in prohibiting such speech.
U.S. v. Swisher [1:07Cr.001 82 (2016)]	U.S. 9 th Circuit	Does the Alvarez decision (2012) also apply to the unauthorized wearing of military medals?	Yes, the Alvarez ruling (2012) applies not only to lying about military awards but also to wearing unearned awards.	The statute was too broad and the government did not have a significant interest in prohibiting such speech.

Almost half of the states (including the District of Columbia) (47.1%), already have enacted statutes prohibiting military impersonation and/or fraud. Currently nine (17.6%) states are in the process of enacting stolen valor statutes. Of the statutes and bills dealing with stolen valor, 74.3 percent deal specifically with military impersonation, while nine states (25.7%) have more general statutes to counter a broader form of impersonation, not military impersonation specifically. Most states (65.7%) do not mention the military uniform, however, decorations such as awards and medals are mentioned in most (62.9%) of the statutes. Ten statutes (28.6%) mention specific medals such as the Medal of Honor, The Silver Star, the Bronze Star Medal, or the Purple Heart. Of all the medals and awards mentioned specifically in the statutes the Medal of Honor is mentioned most often (11 times or 9.6%). Some statutes do not only penalize U.S. armed forces impersonation (44.3%, and 9.8% mention the Reserves specifically), but also penalize National Guard (13.1%) and organized militia (8.2%) impersonation. Falsification of official documents is mentioned in 28.6 percent of the statutes. At least 45.2 percent of the statutes penalize military impersonation and/or fraud as a misdemeanor. Two states deserve special mention, California and Tennessee. The California Stolen Valor Act is the only statute to mention different (as in lower) punishments for veterans who commit this crime, while Tennessee has two separate laws concerning stolen valor, one penalizing fraud and the other penalizing impersonation. For an overview of the state statutes and bills see Table 2 and Appendix H.

Table 2

States and stolen valor related statutes, and bills.

State	Statute? Bill? None?	State Code No.	Title	General or specific military law	Punishment*
Alabama	Statute	13A-8-10.5	Alabama Stolen Valor Act of 2015	Specific	Class B misdemeanor; Class A misdemeanor for certain medals; Class C Felony for MoH
Alaska	None				
Arizona	Statute	32-2451	Impersonation of a public officer; display of identification	General	None stated
Arkansas	Statute	5-37-208	Criminal impersonation	General	Class D felony if the victim is an animal owner; otherwise a Class A misdemeanor
California	Statute	532b	California Stolen Valor Act	Specific	Misdemeanor; when offender is a veteran an infraction or a misdemeanor
Colorado	None				
Connecticut	Statute	53-378	Wearing of armed forces uniform. False representation of award of armed forces decoration, medal, badge, ribbon, button or rosette	Specific	\$500-1000 fine/no more 6 months jail/both
Delaware	Bill	80		Specific	Class A misdemeanor and a minimum fine of \$1000

(continued)

State	Statute? Bill? None?	State Code No.	Title	General or specific military law	Punishment*
DC	None				
Florida	None				
Georgia	None				
Hawaii	None				
Idaho	Statute	18-3126 A		General	None stated
Illinois	Statute	20 ILCS 5/17-2	False personation; solicitation	General	Petty offense of a fine of \$100-\$200
Indiana	Bill	1187		Specific	Class A misdemeanor
Iowa	Statute	718B.1	Impersonating a decorated military veteran	Specific	Serious misdemeanor
Kansas	Statute	21-6410	False membership claim	General	Class C misdemeanor
Kentucky	Statute	434.44	Misrepresenting current or former military status - Exemptions - Penalties - Transfer of fines revenue	Specific	Fine no more than \$5000, no more than 1 year in county jail, or both
Louisiana	Statute	RS 14:67.29	False personation of a veteran or fraudulent representation of a veteran-owned business	Specific	Fine no more than \$1000, no more than 6 months jail, or both
Maine	Bill	642		Specific	None stated
Maryland	Bill	68	Stolen Valor Act of 2016	Specific	Misdemeanor with fine no more than \$2,500, 1 year jail, or both

(continued)

State	Statute? Bill? None?	State Code No.	Title	General or specific military law	Punishment*
Massachusetts	Bill	1641		Specific	Gross misdemeanor with a \$1,000 fine, no more than 1 year in jail, or both
Michigan	None				
Minnesota	Statute	609.4 75	Impersonating officer	General	Misdemeanor
Mississippi	Statute	97-7- 10	Fraudulent statements and representations	General	Fine of no more than \$10,000, no more than 5 years in prison, or both
Missouri	Statute	578.5 10.1	Stolen Valor Act of 2007 (until December 31, 2016)	Specific	1st time class A misdemeanor; 2nd time class E felony; certain medals class D felony; Class C felony for MoH
Missouri	Statute	570.3 10.1	Stolen Valor Act of 2007 (from January 1, 2017)	Specific	1st time class A misdemeanor; 2nd time class E felony; certain medals class E felony; Class D felony for MoH
Montana	None				
Nebraska	None				
Nevada	Statute	199.4 3	Impersonation of officer	General	Gross misdemeanor
New Hampshire	None				
New Jersey	Statute	38A: 14-5	New Jersey Stolen Valor Act	Specific	Crime of fourth degree; Crime of third degree with a minimum \$1,000 fine
New Mexico	Statute	20- 11-5	Wrongful wearing of uniform; penalty	Specific	Misdemeanor; During war/ martial law 4th degree felony

(continued)

State	Statute? Bill? None?	State Code No.	Title	General or specific military law	Punishment*
New York	Bill	7244	Stolen Valor	Specific	Class A misdemeanor
New York	Bill	S5201	Stolen Valor	Specific	Class E felony
North Carolina	None				
North Dakota	None				
Ohio	None				
Oklahoma	Statute	72-6-1	Impersonating a member or veteran of the United States armed forces	Specific	Misdemeanor with a \$100 fine, county jail for 6 months, or both; MoH is felony with a fine of no more than \$5,000, county jail for no more than 1 year, or both; False documents is a felony with a fine of no more than \$5,000, or county jail for no more than 1 year
Oregon	Statute	162.365	Criminal impersonation	General	Class A misdemeanor
Pennsylvania	Bill	43	Uniforms, insignia, and military decorations or medals	Specific	Misdemeanor of 2 nd degree for certain medals
Rhode Island	Bill	H5999	False representation of military status prohibited - Stolen valor	Specific	Misdemeanor with a fine of \$1,000, jail of no more than 1 year, or both

(continued)

State	Statute? Bill? None?	State Code No.	Title	General or specific military law	Punishment*
South Carolina	Statute	25-1-150	Unauthorized wearing of military insignia	Specific	Misdemeanor with a fine at the discretion of the court, imprisoned for no more than 2 years, or both
South Dakota	None				
Tennessee	Statute	58-1-118	Offenses involving improper use or display of military decorations, medals or badges	Specific	Class B misdemeanor; for certain medals class A misdemeanor
Tennessee	Statute	58-1-119	Offense of impersonating a member of the United States armed forces	Specific	Class B misdemeanor
Texas	Statute	32.54	Fraudulent or fictitious military record	Specific	Class B misdemeanor
Utah	Statute	76-9-706	False representation of military award - False wearing or use of medal, name, title, insignia, ritual, or ceremony of a military related organization	Specific	Infraction
Vermont	None				
Virginia	None				
Washington	Statute	RCW 9A.60.045	Criminal impersonation in the second degree	Specific	Gross misdemeanor

(continued)

State	Statute? Bill? None?	State Code No.	Title	General or specific military law	Punishment*
West Virginia	None				
Wisconsin	Bill	30	False statement regarding military service	Specific	Class A misdemeanor; In commission of another crime a class H felony
Wyoming	None				

*In general, felonies are crimes which carry a prison term of at least a year, imprisonment in a state prison (as opposed to a local jail), or the death penalty. All other crimes, in most jurisdictions, are considered misdemeanors (del Carmen, 2004).

**Note. *The data was collected up until June 2016. MoH stands for Medal of Honor.*

Fraud and impersonation. Just as fraud laws exist on the federal level, states have similar statutes which penalize forging official documents and committing fraud. An example is Texas which has a chapter penalizing several different types of fraud, such as forgery (§32.21) and debit and credit card abuse (§32.31). Several statutes in the fraud chapter of the Texas criminal code allow for prosecution for forgeries and/or for fraud. The Texas statute (TX Pen. Code, 32.21) which penalizes creating forgeries is one such example. People have forged official government documents to defraud either the government or private organizations and private people. This could make fraud statutes relevant to decrease military deception even if a stolen valor type statute is not available, as is the case in many states. Another option for dealing with military deception is to sue the offender civilly if a tangible monetary benefit was gained from the victims (Valkenaar, 2013). This is possible through common law, or by statutory provisions. The common law option may be used in states with no stolen valor (like) statute.

The use of military service as a defense in crime

Lastly, there is the option of using sympathy from civilians to gain leniency from the courts when an arrest is made for another (generally unrelated) crime (California bill urges judges, 2014; Efrati, 2009; Holzer & Holzer, 2012; Martin, 2012; Schwartz, 2010). Just like a previous criminal record can be an aggravating factor for sentencing, a military record can be a mitigating factor (*Porter v. McCollum*, 2009). There are several examples of criminal cases where people used their fabricated military record and their counterfeit valor awards as a way of receiving leniency from the courts for crimes, other than impersonation, they had committed (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). Charles Allen Chavous was one such example (Harper, 2014). He used his military record to receive leniency in a murder case. The records were forged and none of the claims of valorous awards and escaping captivity as a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War turned out to be true. A co-conspirator in the murder received the same charges, however, Chavous received a much lower sentence (probation and a fine versus jail time; the coconspirator did have a longer criminal record than Chavous, but both the criminal and military records may have had a great impact on the sentence length) (Harper, 2014).

Military record and valor awards alone are not the only ways to request leniency from the court. Combat service and accompanying PTSD are another way to request leniency in the justice system. Many people can empathize with and imagine what combat personnel have gone through. The same applies to judges and juries. Empathy, in the case of impersonators clearly misplaced, can allow judges and juries to decrease a sentence due to the horror of combat. Combat, PTSD, military record, and valor awards give a fake military 'hero' a good chance of convincing juries and judges to be lenient

towards these ‘heroes’ as the defendant’s history is relevant for sentencing. This misplaced leniency allows these impersonators to either get away with a crime or to receive only a slap on the wrist from the court rather than the maximum punishment. Two examples are Duane Samples, and Arthur Shawcross.

Duane Samples had served in Vietnam and stated that among other experiences, he had witnessed two friends be disemboweled. According to Samples, this is the reason why he murdered Fran Steffens in Silverton, Oregon in December 1975 and attempted to murder her friend by disemboweling both of them. The friend survived. Samples was convicted and applied to have his life sentence commuted by Governor Atiyeh. His explanation was that his Vietnam service led to him suffering from PTSD and since he was treated successfully in prison he should be released. He almost succeeded in being released. Law enforcement, with help from the FBI, researched his military claims and found them to be completely fictitious. For example, the people who he had stated he witnessed being murdered were actually still alive (Ressler & Schachtman, 1992).

Arthur Shawcross was a serial killer who was released after the murders of two children and went on to commit many more murders. At his trial, PTSD due to Vietnam service was brought up, just like Duane Samples did. However, research into Shawcross’ military background showed that he did not see any combat (Douglas & Olshaker, 1995). Keep in mind that a traumatic experience is a prerequisite for the diagnosis of PTSD (see Appendix J). The next chapter will explain the reasons for military impersonation, the societal response, and the system.

CHAPTER III

Reasons for Military Impersonation, the Societal Response, and the System

People generally want to be viewed as good socially conscious (Ariely, Bracha, & Meier, 2009) and respected individuals. There are different ways success and respect can be measured in society. One way is attaining a higher formal education level. An additional path is honorable military service. Successful military careers have been found to enhance veterans' chances of gaining success in civilian society after their separation from the military (Gade, Lakhani, & Kimmel, 1991; Kelty, Kleykamp & Segal, 2010). For instance, the highest position attainable in the United States, the office of the President, has seen more veterans appointed as President than people without military experience⁸. One person who experienced a victorious run for President following an accomplished military career is General Dwight D. Eisenhower who became President after having served as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces during World War II in Europe (Smith, 2012). Progress for veterans has not only been limited to the political arena, veterans have also experienced achievements in other fields, such as business, education, and law enforcement.

An accomplished military career is marked by military awards and ribbons, which comprise the military resume. As stated earlier, the most important military award is the Congressional Medal of Honor (MoH). In the military community as well as in civilian society there is a high level of interest in what MoH recipients have to say. One of the latest living MoH recipients would be a great example of this interest. Dakota Meyer was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on September 15, 2011 (Collier, 2003),

⁸ Out of 44 Presidents to date (2016) 22 have served in the United States military, while another 10 have served in state militias or the National Guard, and 12 Presidents have no military experience.

which allowed him to write a book about his experiences⁹, have his own website¹⁰, permitted him to participate in television shows¹¹, and gained him many followers on social media sites (e.g., he has close to half a million followers on Facebook)¹².

Medal of Honor recipients, Navy SEALs and Special Forces soldiers, people with combat experience specifically, and other non-combat military personnel are generally considered authority figures. One thing that comes with being an authority figure is the fact that most people will be guided by and follow the commands of the authority figures, as has been supported by Stanley Milgram (1974/2009) and his obedience to authority experiments. Having that kind of power over people can be exciting and a reason to embellish military service or outright fabricate a military history.

Besides the fact that a military career can aid people in acquiring upper echelon political and business positions, there are enlistment benefits which can be an important reason for joining the military (Ayers, 2006; Daniel, 2011). These benefits apply to both during and after separation from the service. There are healthcare benefits, which are cared for by the military during service, and by the Department of Veterans Affairs after service. There are also financial benefits, sign-up bonuses, and the ability to receive loans specifically for veterans (such as home loans; Jowers, 2016) are some of these benefits. Lastly there are the educational benefits, which include vocational training during the service, as well as a college tuition compensated either during or after service. These benefits are a motivation for signing up for many people (Daniel, 2011), which is

⁹ Into the fire: A firsthand account of the most extraordinary battle in the Afghan war written with F.J. Bing West

¹⁰ Dakota Meyer's website can be located at: <http://www.dakotameyer.com/index.html>

¹¹ See for example the television show Maximum Warrior

¹² See Dakota Meyer's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SgtDakotaMeyer>

especially relevant since 1973 when the U.S. military became an all-volunteer force (Bouffard, 2005). However, there are times that people have signed up for other reasons. The September 11, 2001 attacks was one such time when people signed up to defend the country rather than for benefits (Daniel, 2011). Authority, respect, and benefits can all be motivations to enlist, however, they can also be motivations for military impersonation. The following section will review some of the psychological explanations for military impersonation.

Psychological explanations

There are several psychological explanations for military impersonation. Admiration and respect which accompany high ranks and the excitement of combat positions are a considerable influence. Being admired and respected by people who listen to what you have to say, such as war stories, can be addictive. Besides admiration and respect there is the idea of uniqueness. People feel the need to be special and different from one another and since fairly few people in U.S. society enlist in the military (U.S. Department of Defense, 2016) and even fewer serve in combat positions, serving in the military makes a person special and unique. Impersonation may be a way for an impersonator to feel unique without having to go through the dangers and tribulations of military service.

Then there are the psychiatric disorders. Some psychiatric disorders contain symptoms of grandiose thinking (thinking one is a hero for example), of manipulation, and of lying. All these manifestations may be visible and possibly necessary for someone to impersonate another, in some cases for decades. Psychiatric disorders may also benefit a person if the disorder is a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recognized disorder,

which means there is a financial and therapeutic benefit to be gained. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is one such disorder which is connected to combat related *traumatic* experiences for which benefits and mental healthcare are available through the VA. Benefits for PTSD can be beneficial for people who really suffer from the disorder, however, since PTSD is not a difficult disorder to fake (Sparr & Pankratz, 1983) it is easy for impersonators to apply and receive monetary benefits for a disorder they do not have (at times going so far as to admit to having committed war crimes; Burkett & Whitley, 1998). This topic will be covered partly in the next section and in the fraud section since it applies to both sections.

Admiration, respect, sympathy, and attention. Respect is of great importance in society (Gilligan, 2003). In some echelons of society, it is even the currency through which people survive as Elijah Anderson experienced in his study of urban communities (Anderson, 1999). People have killed and committed other types of violence for respect (Gilligan, 2003), it would, therefore, not be inconceivable to presume that property and financial crimes to gain respect would be a realistic option. Respect is not limited to other people's praises; it also includes self-respect. When self-esteem was studied in a college student sample, the researchers found that people who were securely emotionally attached to their caregivers displayed higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of shame (Passanisi, Gervasi, Madonia, Guzzo & Greco, 2015), and feelings of shame and inadequacy may lead to socially acceptable and criminal boundaries crossing behavior (Gilligan, 2003). Fame, admiration, and attention and everything that comes with it can be strong motivating factors for people. People in different fields, such as entertainment, politics, and science can be considered heroes by the general public. To be recognized as

a hero a person should have taken a risk to their life and/or health as well as provide service to a socially valued goal (Becker & Eagly, 2004). This applies to voluntary actions, or in the case of the military, actions which go beyond what is considered the norm in a combat situation. The act also does not have to be altruistic to be considered heroic (Becker & Eagly, 2004). One group from which heroes have historically been recognized is the military (Feinstein, 2015; Zimbardo, 2008). People such as John Basilone, a WWII Marine who received the Medal of Honor, with its accompanying attention, as well as the Navy Cross (Collier, 2003), and Audie Murphy, a soldier who was one of the most decorated combat soldiers of WWII as well as a movie star (Collier, 2003). This fame can be used for both good and evil (Einstein, 1954). Fame can inspire people to become better citizens of society, or worse citizens (Sanchez, 2000). Role models and heroes are important tools for constructing collective identities in society (Yair, Girsh, Alayan, Hues, & Or, 2014; Zimbardo, 2008). Heroes are important, as Sanchez (2000) explains “Heroes symbolize something greater than attaining wealth and fame, performing death-defying acts, or acquiring media-promoted status. They reflect our values, our ideals, our dreams. Their qualities endure as a guide and inspiration for all of us to be heroes” (p. 61). The qualities Sanchez highlights are supported by a study of people’s opinions of what functions heroes serve (Kinsella, Ritchie, & Igou, 2015), in which subjects identified 14 categories, such as to make the world better, to do what no one else will, to instill hope, and to protect. The media at times (such as during WWII) was helpful in creating the image of the soldier as a hero (McClancy, 2013). The increased media attention may have motivated some people into pursuing becoming a hero, for example through actually enlisting or through impersonation. Some people

crave admiration and respect to a level that they will do anything to receive it, especially since heroism seems to have been confused with celebrity and popularity in American society since the 1970s (Graebner, 2013), and fame and fortune seem to be what many people strive for. This may in part be due to the American dream, which implies that in the U.S. people can improve themselves economically if they work hard. Some people want to reap the benefits without performing the actual work, or try reaching their goals in an illegal manner (for example through drug trafficking, or falsifying documents to attain benefits they are not entitled to) as posited by Strain theory (Lanier & Henry, 1998). Craving to be a hero and to be respected and admired can become pathological, which is what people refer to as the Hero Complex or Hero Syndrome. The research on the heroism (Zimbardo, 2008) and the hero complex/ syndrome in psychology is scarce (Sullivan & Venter, 2005). The Hero Complex/ Syndrome is one way to psychologically explain why people impersonate or act like someone they are not. The hero complex seems to entail the idea of a person pretending to be a hero because they love the admiration and respect that come with being considered a hero. The hero complex is related to the constant search for a distinctive identity, counterconformity (Sonnenfeld, 2015). There is also the possibility that people will take extreme measures to pursue heroism; risks they would not otherwise take, which may endanger the lives of other people as well as their own lives. In an example of institutional hero complex, the Houston fire department with its risk taking culture allowed firefighters to expose themselves and other firefighters to extremely dangerous situations, taking more risks than necessary. These circumstances got them and other firefighters killed because the risk (of firefighter death) and the benefits (saving a life) were not taken into account

(Mosqueda, 2014). At times people can create life-threatening situations to come out and save the day. This can lead to extremely dangerous and even deadly situations. One of the most widely known examples of this is Munchhausen syndrome by proxy, where a caretaker hurts someone (usually a child) (Turner & Reid, 2002) to gratify the offenders needs, often of receiving attention. The hero complex can therefore have grave consequences for people afflicted with it.

Munchhausen syndrome. Medically, there is another disorder which shows many similarities with military impersonation and attention seeking, Munchhausen's syndrome. Munchhausen is a disorder on the spectrum of factitious disorders (Sparr & Pankratz, 1983). Another factitious disorder is malingering which differs from Munchhausen on one point, there being a tangible benefit to be gained, which is not the case for Munchhausen, otherwise there is great similarity between the disorders (Sparr & Pankratz, 1983). People who suffer from Munchhausen affliction generally fake medical symptoms, pathologically lie, and wander from one location to another (Turner & Reid, 2002). The typical patients are also inclined to have a criminal record and display sociopathic behavior during their lifetime (Turner & Reid, 2002). Often the dishonesty and the serious, yet fake, medical symptoms warrant increased attention for the patient, which may be one reason for the lying (Turner & Reid, 2002). This spotlight, the misleading, the wandering from one location to another are all present with military impersonators. So are inconsistencies in the patient's or impersonator's story, which may arouse suspicions of people who are confronted with the stories (Turner & Reid, 2002). The only difference between the disorders is the content of the lie (medical or military). Coincidentally, Karl Friedrich Hieronymus von Munchhausen, was a veteran whose

exaggerated stories about his travels (including his military exploits) earned him great renown (Turner & Reid, 2002). Wanting to feel like a hero to receive recognition can also be related to the need of feeling unique in an ocean of similarity. The next section will examine the need for inadequacy.

Inadequacy. Another psychological phenomenon which may be applicable to stolen valor is inadequacy. People may feel inadequate in many different situations, which is sometimes referred to as the imposter syndrome. The person, a high achiever, experiences a feeling that he or she does not belong and will be exposed as a fraud, even though the person's actual accomplishments substantiate his or her abilities (Weir, 2013). Some groups likely to have populations afflicted with the imposter syndrome are graduate students (Weir, 2013), and therapists (Theriault & Gazzola, 2005). This syndrome is fairly common, however, as feelings of inadequacy can have a detrimental impact on whoever suffers from these negative emotions. There are actions that can be taken by people to relieve the negative inadequacy, which could mean practicing skills or to take away that which makes a person feel inadequate. The former is a healthier way of dealing with negative emotions, while the latter is an unhealthy and possibly criminal manner of dealing with feelings of inadequacy. John Douglas in his study of multiple victim murderers found that feelings of grandiosity as well as feelings of inadequacy were conflicting within these murderers' which were at the root of their aggressive behavior (Douglas & Olshaker, 1999). Feelings of inadequacy can, therefore, have a great impact on people and lead to people taking action, legal or illegal to eliminate the negative feelings. Inadequacy can also lead to misrepresentations of oneself to make

others believe that he or she is better than they actually are which can have a positive impact on the embellisher's affect.

Dishonesty and unethical behavior. The behavior portrayed by impersonators is dishonest and unethical and was studied by several researchers. People, in general, tend to be truthful (Cappelen, Sorenson, & Tungodden, 2013). This finding is supported by Halevy, Shalvi and Verschuere (2014) who found that most people are usually honest while only a small group of individuals lie frequently. The frequent liars were found to cheat for personal benefit more often, displayed more psychopathic tendencies, and perceived deception in a less negative light. However, people tend to honestly report their unethical behavior (Zimmerman, Shalvi & Bereby-Meyer (2014). Having said that, cheating occurs more often if other people can benefit from the cheating in addition to themselves, and increases with the amount of people who would benefit from the results (Gino, Ayal, & Ariely, 2013). It also allows the cheater to feel better about his or her actions and make him or her feel less morally corrupt (Gino, Ayal, & Ariely, 2013). It matters whether the lie benefits only the liar, a third party, both, or neither which can have a differential impact on dishonesty. Bizziou-van-Pol, Haenen, Novaro, Occhipinti Liberman, and Capraro's (2015) study found that a positive relationship exists between the aversion to lie in their own and another person's benefit (a Pareto white lie) and the level of altruism and cooperation. When altruism and cooperation between subjects go up, people are more likely to tell an altruistic white lie (which benefits another person, but comes at the expense of the liar), and men were found to be more likely to tell an altruistic white lie than a Pareto white lie as compared to women. There may even be a biological basis for dishonesty which benefits a group. Under the influence of oxytocin, a

neuropeptide, people were more likely to be dishonest provided that the dishonesty benefitted a group and not result in any losses, or benefit for the liar (Shalvi & De Dreu, 2014). Further experiments found that there is also an in-group, out-group effect on people's level of dishonesty. When it was an in-group member who clearly cheated, the other in-group members were more likely to cheat, while if an out-group member clearly cheated the cheating in the group decreased. If cheating was discussed prior to a task on which the subjects were tested cheating also declined (Gino, Ayal, & Ariely, 2009). This shows that people are more likely to copy the behavior from other people who fall in the same group as them, while they are less likely to do so if the cheaters are from the out-group. Group influence can be relevant as a study by Bohns, Roghanizad and Xu (2014) found that people influence other people, and individuals do not realize the influence they have on subjects when people suggest the subjects commit an unethical act. What may assist a person in resisting committing unethical behavior are self-control resources. Self-control is an important factor protecting against unethical behavior especially if combined with a strong moral identity, which was also found to be a protective factor (Gino, Schweitzer, Mead, & Ariely, 2011). No moral identity and having depleted self-control resources is a recipe for increased unethical behavior and may explain why some people impersonate military heroes. On top of that, people who impersonate may increase their unethical behavior as people who buy and wear counterfeit products are more likely to make people feel less authentic which in turn increases the possibility of people behaving unethically as well as judging other individuals as being unethical (Gino, Norton, & Ariely, 2010). The uniforms, and decorations worn by impersonators are counterfeit products and wearing them may therefore raise the amount of military

impersonation. Dishonesty and unethical behavior applies to stolen valor because people who either create their whole military history or embellish their existing military record are dishonest about their service and have a tendency to act in an unethical manner and commit crimes. There are certain conditions which may make people more or less likely to cheat which is relevant to public policy as tax collection and benefits rely on self-reporting information (Cappelen, Sorenson, & Tungodden, 2013) and this body of research demonstrates that.

Uniqueness. People experience a need to feel special and unique (Erb & Gebert, 2014; Snyder & Fromkin, 1977). Some people may experience this need on lower levels, while others experience a high need for uniqueness. Most people, however, fall in the medium range (Erb & Gebert, 2014; Snyder & Fromkin, 1977). Besides this, a personal sense of uniqueness, especially in combination with good relationships with significant others, can lead to increased happiness (Demir, Simsek, & Procsal, 2013). There also seems to be a relationship between self-aggrandizement and narcissism while this may be different from genuine self-esteem (Tracy, Cheng, Robins, & Trzesniewski, 2009). People with hubristic pride which was found to be positively related to narcissism, show many correlations with other negative outcomes, such as increased aggression, and poor relationship quality (Tracy, Cheng, Robins, & Trzesniewski, 2009). Hubristic pride, which may be related to trait attribution, is also thought to be related to an increased need for uniqueness, while the same may not apply for people who attribute their pride to effort (Huang, Dong, & Mukhopadhyay, 2014). Military impersonation stories often contain many details about the impersonators' imagined combat heroism. Impersonation may therefore show a link with narcissism, rather than healthy self-esteem. Since 1973,

when the United States became a volunteer military (Bouffard, 2005), a very small segment of the population has chosen the option to serve. Of the entire U.S. population of over 323,000,000 people in 2016 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.a.) only 1,344,747 people are currently (2016) on active duty (U.S. Department of Defense, 2016), and 21,680,534 people were designated veterans in 2015 (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.). This makes military personnel, past and present, a rarity in society and therefore special and unique. The exclusivity of military service may be something that might be coveted by people who do not have the ability to serve and, therefore, choose to pretend they are part of this exclusive group of people. Being unique and being able to share and feel validated by your close friends may increase happiness, after all (Demir, Simsek, & Procsal, 2013). Uniqueness has been researched more thoroughly when it comes to consumers and their consumption patterns, since uniqueness is often visible through the materials one chooses to wear or carry (Tepper Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001). Results of consumer studies can apply to military impersonators as well. If the person's motivation is to be different from another this is called counterconformity motivation (Tepper Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001). As stated earlier, there are few people who serve in the military and even fewer in combat, and special forces (e.g., Navy SEALs). If a person fits the counterconformity motivation they may pretend to have served and have performed extraordinary acts, which distinguishes them from the rest of society who have not experienced the same. People may also discard products which suggested nonconformity at one time, but have lost that quality. These people may search for new products which have the nonconforming quality, until the same thing happens with this product, and so on (Tepper Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001). This circle can last for as long as a person

allows it guide them. This continues upgrading of products may also be visible with impersonators. Many change their stories over time and become more and more special in their actions (even admitting to war crimes in some cases), and their rank, which has a tendency to increase over time and become more unique as there are fewer high ranking officials than lower ranking officials in the military hierarchy.

Psychiatric disorders. There are several psychiatric disorders which can affect a person's behavior and may be relevant to military impersonation. Personality problems are one category, which is bolstered by a study by Emmerson, Pankratz, Joos and Smith (1994) which found personality problems common among problematic medical patients in the VA system. Psychosis is another, and the last relevant disorder covered here is posttraumatic stress disorder due to trauma being common among combat personnel.

Personality problems. Psychopathy, Antisocial personality disorder, Narcissistic personality disorder. Personality consists of traits which are generally assumed to be consistent temporally and over different situations (Carver & Scheier, 2000; Gleitman, Fridlund, & Reisberg, 1999; Lynam & Derefinko, 2006). Personality is internal to people, and is manifested on different components (e.g., cognitive, affective, behavioral, and interpersonal) (Lynam & Derefinko, 2006). Personality disorders are characterized by “an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 646). This occurs in at least two of the following areas, cognition, affectivity, interpersonal functioning, and impulse control. The pattern is consistent and stable over time and different situations, causes significant distress in functioning, and is not explained or caused by physiological or other medical conditions (American Psychiatric

Association, 2013). There are several personality disorders which may apply to military impersonation, namely narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), antisocial personality disorder (APD), and psychopathy. The three previously mentioned personality disorders all contain symptoms conducive to lying and pretending one is better than they really are. NPD is characterized by "... a pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 685 [DSM-IV-TR ed.]; APA, 2013, p. 645 [DSM-5 ed.]), and APD is characterized by "... a pattern of disregard for, and violation of the rights of others" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 685 [DSM-IV-TR ed.]; APA, 2013, p. 645 [DSM-5 ed.]) - and both recognized DSM-5 disorders are examples of disorders with at least some symptoms showing that the sufferer cares only about themselves and think they are better than other people. Therefore, they are entitled to a better educational, military, or otherwise background than what they actually have obtained. This is especially true for the narcissistic personality disorder (DSM-5 code 301.81) which is characterized by thoughts of grandiosity, and a need for attention in combination with a lack of empathy for other people (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; see Appendix K). Antisocial personality disorder (DSM-5 code 301.7) shows similarities with NPD when it comes to manipulative behavior. APD is relevant separately because of the lack of regard for laws and continuously breaking of them (which includes military impersonation and fraud based upon it). Antisocial personality disorder is characterized by a lack of caring for laws and rules or the rights of other people impulsivity, lack of caring for safety, and illegal behavior (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; see Appendix L). Another disorder which may be relevant when it comes to military impersonation and its

accompanying embellishments is psychopathy. Clinically, psychopathy is generally characterized as “a combination of inferred personality traits and socially deviant behaviors” (Hare & Neumann, 2006, p.59). Psychopaths are people who care very little about other people and other people’s feelings. The disorder is characterized by a lack of empathy, allowing the psychopath to use other people for their own benefit (Hare, 1993). These people are often also proficient liars, being able to maintain their lies for extended periods of time. Hare describes psychopaths as “... often witty and articulate. They can be amusing and entertaining conversationalists, ready with a quick and clever comeback, and can tell unlikely but convincing stories that cast themselves in a good light” (1993, pp. 34-35). This description is very similar to many of the stories Burkett and Whitley (1998) reveal concerning the many people who have been caught lying about military service. Many of these impersonators have served as Navy SEALs or Special Forces and killed many people and have been in crazy situations that a person is unlikely to survive (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). There seems to be some commonalities between APD and psychopathy. The test used for diagnosing psychopathy is the Psychopathy Check List – Revised (PCL-R). This test measures factors, factor one is the interpersonal/ affective level, and factor two is the social deviance level. The PCL-R shows a strong association with factor two items, but only a weak association with factor one items (Hare & Neumann, 2006). This shows that there is indeed overlap, but that the two disorders are not to be equated. The hero complex, uniqueness, and personality disorders may be related and one or more may be present in an impersonator.

Psychosis. Psychosis is different from personality disorders in that psychosis is a state where the sufferer has lost the connection with reality as it is known to the majority

of people. A psychotic state is a symptom of several disorders, such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, but can also be caused by the ingestion of certain drugs. Psychosis is characterized by delusions, hallucinations, disorganized thinking, grossly disorganized or abnormal motor behavior, and negative symptoms such as diminished emotional expression or decreased in motivated self-initiated purposeful activities, or avolition (APA, 2013). The small amount of people afflicted with this disorder, can impersonate military personnel while they are experiencing a psychotic state, because in their psychotic state they may genuinely think they are in the military. However, there generally is no intent to commit fraud or to abuse the military status for personal gain.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Although most service members adjust well to returning to the U.S. after deployment (Bowling & Sherman, 2008; McNally, 2003), this does not apply to every service member. Some members have trouble adjusting back into society, while others have more serious mental problems, such as PTSD. A version of PTSD has been documented since at least WWI, when it was called shellshock (Langer, 2011). To be diagnosed with PTSD a person needs to have personally experienced a traumatic life or death experience. Consequently, PTSD is closely related to the military due to combat consisting of life and death experiences. Some of the other symptoms of PTSD are avoiding stimuli which are associated with the traumatic event, persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic event, and persistently experiencing increased arousal (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; and Appendix J). Since 1980, PTSD is a disorder for which compensation can be received (Murdoch, Nelson, & Fortier, 2003). Compensation is what motivates individuals to misuse this disorder to take advantage of Veterans Administration benefits (Burkett & Whitley, 1998;

Demakis & Elhai, 2011; McGrath & Frueh, 2002; Pankratz, 1990; Sparr & Pankratz, 1983), as well as for therapists to increase and/or maintain their client pool (Frueh, et al., 2003; Turner, 1995). With the veteran population decreasing¹³, as stated in the uniqueness section, there should also be a decreased demand for VA services and therefore fewer employment opportunities for therapists. However, the applications for PTSD benefits have been rising most of the time from 1980 to 1998, with two dips in the 1990s (Murdoch, Nelson, & Fortier, 2003). More about PTSD and fraud can be found in the fraud section. The diagnostic criteria for PTSD for people over the age of six (DSM-V code 309.81) can be found in appendix 13. The next section will examine fraud as a motive for military impersonation.

Fraud

There are many different forms fraud can take, for example pretending to have PTSD as mentioned in an earlier section. This is not surprising as there are benefits involved with military service. These benefits are not available to people who have not served or who have received a dishonorable discharge from the military. Furthermore, some awards come with additional benefits. The Congressional Medal of Honor, for instance, comes with a stipend of \$1,299.61 per month independent of other benefits the MoH recipient may be eligible for (Special Benefits Allowances, 2016). People have murdered for less, which makes forging documents to support a benefits claim an understandable choice for the offender and a reasonable concern for taxpayers.

Government benefits are often thought to be perpetual and comprising an enormous

¹³ Of the entire population of over 323,000,000 people in 2016 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.a.) only 1,344,747 people are currently (2016) on active duty (U.S. Department of Defense, 2016), and 21,680,534 veterans in 2015 (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.).

amount of money. This feeling of abundance may have a negative effect on people's unethical behavior. Gino and Pierce (2009) found that an environment containing abundant wealth led to increased cheating as opposed to an environment lacking wealth, and envy. The envy in turn also led to an increased likelihood for cheating for personal gain.

Benefits are generally awarded through government agencies, however, government agencies are not alone in aiding veterans and they are not the only organizations targeted for fraud. The next section will concern public fraud in the form of fame, then fraud against government agencies, followed by private organizations, and lastly the use of veteran status to gain leniency in the criminal justice system.

Fame. Fame and the attention and (financial) opportunities that come with it, can be motivations for fraud, having psychological needs met, or both. Writing a book and making a movie based on your experiences can gain a person fame and fortune (if both sell well). The fame and the attention needs have been addressed earlier, this section concerns fraud to gain fame and fortune. It is not too difficult to imagine military personnel or veterans becoming famous due to their military experiences. There are many movies, and books detailing war stories, both real and imagined, or a combination thereof. Especially popular are books written by special forces operatives, such as Green Berets, Navy SEALs, or the Marine Corps' MarSoc. Think for instance about the book *American Sniper* by Chris Kyle (a Navy SEAL), or *Lone Survivor* by Marcus Luttrell. If a book has a compelling story, there is a good chance of it being made into a movie or a television series. This is not a recent occurrence, books have been authored and movies/television shows have been created concerning World War I, World War II, the Cold

War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the First Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the war in Afghanistan. See for example, the book *American Sniper* (Kyle, DeFelice, & McEwen, 2012) which was made into a movie (Eastwood, Lorenz, Lazar, Cooper, Morgan, Eastwood 2014) which concerns Operation Iraqi Freedom and Kyle's experiences as a Navy SEAL in general; *Band of Brothers* (Ambrose, 1992) and the series with the same title (HBO, 2001); and *The Pacific* (Ambrose, 2009), and the series with the same title (HBO, 2010), both titles concern the American military during World War II. Military experiences can also be an inspiration for the creation of military art. One such example would be Maximilian Uriarte who created the Terminal Lance comic while in the Marine Corps and his first graphic novel, "*White Donkey*" (Uriarte, 2016) based on his experiences. The fame and accompanying financial rewards that the authors received is a motivation for some people to fabricate a military history so as to replicate the fame and financial benefits (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). If fame is not attainable, fabricating a military history can still benefit an impersonator through claiming benefits at government agencies. The search for fame can cause another problem. In some cases, making up a military history is used by people who are least likely expected to do so. Faking a military history or embellishing one is not limited to the lower socio-economic stratum for financial gain. Several people who have been caught faking or embellishing their military records were respected people in society with considerable influence, like a judge or a Pulitzer Prize winner (Landphair, 2011), a state lawmaker (Washington state lawmaker, 2016), and an eminent historian (Maslan, 2006). The general public may come to rely on these impersonators' stories as historical truth, because the stories have been publicized repeatedly. One good story may lead to more media attention etc. thus creating

‘history’ (Windsor & Rizer, 2012). Impersonators communicate their stories to the media and college students alike. One instance of a college history professor lying about his military service (among other parts of his life) is that of Joseph J. Ellis (Maslan, 2006; Wilgoren, 2001). Ellis won a Pulitzer and was later outed as portraying himself as a Vietnam combat veteran when he was neither a combat soldier, nor had he served in Vietnam. However, that did not stop him from telling his students his personal war stories (Wilgoren, 2001). The Library of Congress veterans history project¹⁴ has interviewed veterans to preserve their stories and the history of their service and of the country (Library of Congress, n.d.). Several of the veterans who were interviewed for the project turned out to be impersonators when their statements were compared to historical facts and their own military records (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). Fame can be a powerful motivation and can literally change history if the claims about service are not fact checked.

Government benefits. Since the military became an all-volunteer force in 1973 (Bouffard, 2005), the military at times had difficulty attracting enough qualified personnel. To counter these problems, the military would offer benefits. This would attract more people and at the same time made the military a competitive employer for young people while they are transitioning from adolescence to adulthood (Kelty, Kleykamp, & Segal, 2010; Samspon & Laub, 1996). The military may also offer stability in family life (Call & Teachman, 1991; Kelty, Kleykamp, & Segal, 2010), and be a more attractive option for economically and educationally disadvantaged people (Bachman, Segal, Freedman-Doan, & O’Malley, 2000). There are several benefits to enlisting, such

¹⁴ The Library of Congress Veterans History Project can be located at: <https://www.loc.gov/vets/>

as having a college education paid for, getting a loan, medical benefits and financial benefits (through the Department of Veterans Affairs). These benefits, although in many cases fairly received, are reasons to commit fraud for people who have not served or who have not served in a position for which extra benefits are available (such as prisoners of war [POW]) (Frueh, et al. 2005). The agency most likely to be targeted by con artists is the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This is not surprising since this is the federal agency that coordinates the care for veterans, both health care and financial care.

Receiving a 100 percent benefits may be a very high reward for a fairly little amount of work for a person who has very little. Ariely, Gneezy, Loewenstein, and Mazar (2009) found that very high reward levels may have a negative effect on a person's performance. This performance can include the ability to improve with therapy, which could be reduced if the monetary reward is large. This shows that the higher the benefits, the better the chance that a person would not keep performing to the best of their ability and the focus can be transferred on receiving benefits rather than improving physical and mental well-being, which can increase fraud. A study by Pankratz and Jackson (1994) of patients in the VA system found that there are quite a few patients who wander from one VA hospital to another. The habitual wanderers, people who were admitted to four or more VA hospitals each year over a period of five years, averaged a hospital admission per month over the study period. Although not all of these people may fall in the malingering/ fraud group, there is a decent chance that many of these people do fall into that group. Since the hospitals communicate poorly with one another (Pankratz & Jackson, 1994), it would be easy to wander from one to another if a person does not get the benefit rating one is searching for. It should not be surprising that paperwork

forgeries, most commonly the DD-214, and malingering, both physical and mental, are strategies used by impersonators to obtain benefits they have no right to. Every person who has served in the military, upon release, will get separation papers, also known as the DD-214. This paperwork contains identifying information (e.g., name, date of birth, and social security number), and all military service information (e.g., military specialty, military education, decorations, medals, badges, citations, and campaign ribbons). The DD-214 is the military equivalent of the civilian resume and an important document in proving awards and education received during service. Because it has all the service information it is the document most often requested to prove military service and activities and awards received. The DD-214 is therefore the paper to forge to receive benefits, and forging it is not difficult (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). Forging official documents is only part of the defrauding scheme. To receive benefits for physical or mental disorders one also has to fake the disorders claimed. The term for this behavior is malingering. Malingering is lying about a physical or psychological disorder for benefits, such as financial compensation or as a legal defense to avoid a criminal conviction or civil verdict against the malingerer (VandenBos, 2007; Turner & Reid, 2002). Malingering may even be a problem within the service, where people may mangle to avoid duty, as evidenced by the law created to counter such behavior (10 U.S.C. 915, 1956). Many physical disorders can be proven through diagnostic measures; the few that cannot are easy targets for malingerers. Diagnostic measures for psychological disorders are different in that they are based on self-reporting by the patient (McNally, 2003), and there is generally no clearly visible physical evidence of the disorder. Mental disorders are therefore easier targets and more likely to be used by impersonators for personal

benefit. One psychological disorder that is an obvious objective for abuse in the military context is posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Demakis & Elhai, 2011; see Appendix J for the DSM-5 criteria for PTSD), which is difficult to confirm physically, relies heavily on self-reporting by the patient, and can occur only after having experienced a traumatic life and death experience. Overstating of military service and possible mental health problems due to service has been considered a problem for at least a decade (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Frueh, et al., 2003; Frueh et al., 2005; McGrath & Frueh, 2002). Frueh et al. (2005) compared self-reported combat exposure in Vietnam and documented evidence of combat exposure (such as combat medals, military training, duty assignments, etc.) found that many people report their exposure honestly. However, this does not apply to the small amount of people (5% in the study) who either embellished their Vietnam combat service or their military service in general (Frueh, et al., 2005). Another study found worse distress among veterans who applied for health care and financial benefits from the VA in relation to PTSD than veterans who applied only for health care benefits, suggesting that that financial benefits may not have the impact on the veterans' health that mental health practitioners hope for (Frueh, et al., 2003). Frueh et al. (2003) add that there is an increase in people applying for benefits from the VA. Memory recall may also not be stable over time when it comes to military hazards (Southwick, Morgan, Nicolauo, & Charney, 1997). Certain experiences may be recalled easier and some may only be recalled when after media attention focusing on the danger of an experience (Wessely, et al., 2003). Combat experiences may be remembered more under certain circumstances than under other circumstances. Wessely et al. (2003) found that Gulf veterans reported more exposures as compared to a group of veterans from the Bosnia

conflict. The memories were related to worsening health perceptions as well as forgetting earlier reported exposures which had improved perceptions. Federal agencies are not alone in their susceptibility to fraud. State agencies can be targeted as well, as many states offer financial benefits for veterans. Take Texas as an example, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)¹⁵ offers several benefits to veterans; personalized military and/or disability license plates, and fees, among which registration fees (TX Occ. Title 2 Chapter 55), and certain parking fee exemptions (TX Transp. §681.008). Besides vehicle related fees, Texas also offers the Hazelwood act¹⁶ which allows veterans to get an education without the student loans (TX Educ. §54.341). The DD-214 can be important here as it is often the easiest avenue to confirm military service. Confirming military service is not only relevant for government agencies, it may also be used in the private sector (for example J.P. Morgan Chase bank which has benefits for veterans¹⁷).

Private sector benefits. Charities have become big business (Buffett, 2013) and as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is not the fastest nor the most helpful organization when it comes to aiding veterans¹⁸ (see for example, Kime, 2016), private organizations have entered the quandary in care left exposed by the VA. These private organizations, such as the Semper Fi Fund¹⁹, the Wounded Warrior Project²⁰, and the Troops First Foundation²¹ which provide many different kinds of support to veterans, are another source for people to defraud. The last organization has been defrauded by

¹⁵ Some of the benefits the Texas DMV offers veterans can be located at:
<http://www.txdmv.gov/motorists/for-our-troops>

¹⁶ The Texas Hazelwood Act can be located at: <http://www.tvc.texas.gov/Hazlewood-Act.aspx>

¹⁷ Some of the benefits offered by this company can be located at:
<https://www.chase.com/checking#!cca:ccc> see the premier plus checking account

¹⁸ A google search for the term “VA service problems” nets a total of 254,000,000 results.

¹⁹ The website for the semper fi fund can be located at: <https://semperfifund.org/>

²⁰ The website for the wounded warrior project can be located at: <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/>

²¹ The troopers first foundation website can be located at: <http://www.troopsfirstfoundation.org/>

Michael Duye Campbell, who lied about his service and created a story of combat related injuries to receive benefits (Krause & Tarrant, 2013). Jeffrey Alcorn defrauded charities by providing false documents to substantiate his claims of military service to receive a service dog for PTSD, and to receive a free flight. He admitted to authorities to not having served in the military (Barber & Smith, 2015). Not only do people defraud private sector veterans aid organizations, sometimes organizations abuse military status to increase their funding. People have been found to be more inclined to lie if it would benefit other people (Biziou-van-Pol, et al., 2015). Funding may or may not all be used to benefit veterans either. One such example of private sector fraud would be the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP). The WWP started as an organization to assist military personnel who returned to the U.S. after being wounded in combat. Due to their goals, the project became one of the most recognizable military/veterans charities. The charity grew so large that to some of the employees name recognition and pecuniary gain became more important than assisting veterans. These employees lied about how the money was used to receive more monetary donations. Only a few months ago several of the executive officers were fired for abusing funds meant for veterans (Reid, & Janisch, 2016).

Societal Response to Military Impersonation

As stated above, military service can have a profound influence on people (Gade, Lakhani, & Kimmel, 1991; Kelty, Kleykamp, & Segal, 2010). Financial benefits (Jowers, 2016) and educational benefits (Ayers, 2006; Daniel, 2011), and leniency in the courts (Porter v. McCollum, 2009) are some examples of positive effects military service can have. Media attention for combat actions and highlights of specific personnel involved in these actions. This attention and the positive effects of military service can be too much

for an impersonator to resist. Military fraud and the media coverage concerning stolen valor make it seem that society cares deeply about this subject. The following sections will cover the military support in society and the response in society to stolen valor.

Support for the military in American society. American society has not always been supportive of its military personnel. There are clear differences between the homecoming the veterans of World War II, Vietnam, and currently Iraq and Afghanistan received which highlights this. WWII veterans were appreciated and admired. This generation, also called the Greatest Generation, enjoyed wide support in society from the attacks on Pearl Harbor and the Nazi declaration of war through the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Moskos, 1971). Books written by WWII veterans sell well and some have even made the New York Times best seller list, as in the case of Major Dick Winters' (known because of *Band of Brothers*) memoirs (Winters & Kingseed, 2008). Vietnam veterans did not receive this same welcome (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Reph, 2014). Veterans who came home were spat on by protesters of the Vietnam War (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Reph, 2014) and often felt it better to ignore their service rather than highlight it (Burkett & Whitley, 1998), due to increasing dissent in the population concerning the Vietnam War (Smith, 1971). Differences appeared in the treatment of WWII and Korean War veterans versus the way Vietnam veterans were treated in a VA hospital (Perlin, 2015). For the Global War on Terrorism the homecoming for military personnel seems to be a mixture of WWII appreciation and respect, and at the same time disdain similar to what Vietnam veterans experienced due to legality questions concerning the War in Iraq. Another factor that Vietnam and the "Global War on Terrorism" have in common is that both wars did not seem to have an ending with a clear

victory or loss, or a way to give the fighters and the country some closure. Therefore, the response that the returning military received seems mixed for the most current fighters. When society holds the military in positive regard they are likely to award benefits to veterans. Benefits, such as the GI Bill, health care, and education, have been discussed earlier. The higher the regard of society the better the benefits, which should coincide with increased fraud since there is more to steal.

Stolen valor in society. There are hundreds of media reports concerning people who have been caught lying about their military service (see for example, Barber & Smith, 2014; Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Mara, 2015; Serio, 2015; Steele, 2010; tlmpr80, 2009; Vaughn, 2012; Wilgoren, 2001). There are movies which include military impersonation as part of their storyline (see for example, *Wedding Crashers*). The number of stories about impersonation demonstrates that there is a real problem, inspiring the creation of the Stolen Valor Act (Stern, Stern, & Mink, 2014). This issue seems to be acknowledged more acutely by military personnel and people who have a relative or a close friend who serves or has served in the past, than people with no connections to the military. It should therefore be no surprise that active military personnel and veterans are the most likely people to investigate claims of stolen valor. It is not astonishing that people with a military background are the most likely to identify impersonators since the military system is confusing at best (this will be covered in the next section; the awards system has already been covered). Medals and awards, ranks, uniforms, and training for similar jobs in different branches can and often do differ per branch. This makes it difficult for people unfamiliar with the military or even the specific branch to judge if someone is faking military service or not and to call them out, while not disrespecting

veterans who did serve. Many veterans fight stolen valor because they are hurt over the theft of heroism, respect, and valor by their friends who often did not make it back alive to the U.S. (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). That is why it has been suggested that the VA needs to step up their confirmation process so as to “guard the legacy of actual combat veterans from being trivialized” (Frueh, et al., 2005, p. 472). History is being kept alive by having veterans come and speak to school and college classes. This makes the event experienced by the veteran more understandable and alive for the students. When people who have actually experienced an event lecture about the event there is no problem, however, the same does not apply to fake veterans lecturing students. Since the impersonators have not participated and experienced an event they have a tendency to make up information about the event, which perpetuates historical inaccuracy in society (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). Some research, such as a search of military records, creating a timeline of events stated by these ‘veterans’, looking at known history facts (e.g., which events took place, where, when, under which circumstances, and which equipment was available at the time) can help bring these lies to light. There may be an explanation as to why people are more inclined to believe stories told by veterans even if they are proved erroneous. People in general have a hard time distinguishing truth from lies, and often misjudge false statements as true (Bond & DePaulo, 2006). This applies to confessions, where the prevailing sense is that people will not admit to crimes they did not commit, however, this has proven to be incorrect (Free & Ruesink, 2016; Kassin, 2008, 2005; Leo & Ofshe, 1998). There are 1740 known exoneration cases in the U.S from 1989 until February 2016, according to the National Registry of Exonerations (2016). The Innocence Project has researched the cases in which they provided legal assistance, and

found that over a quarter of the cases in which DNA was used to overturn the verdict a false confession was the basis for the original verdict (Scheck, Neufeld, & Dwyer, 2003). Confessions are generally considered persuasive evidence of guilt for several reasons, because most people who confess are actually guilty and often confessions are corroborated by other evidence (Leo & Ofshe, 1998). False confession research and how confession evidence and biological (DNA) evidence are rated by potential jurors found that if the confession is made against the person's best interest (e.g., admitting to having committed a crime) it will overpower any faith potential jurors have in DNA evidence. DNA evidence is generally highly regarded by potential jurors, but cannot outweigh a confession when the prosecutor has a story explaining the inconsistency between the DNA and the confession evidence (Appleby & Kassin, 2016; Scheck, Neufeld, & Dwyer, 2003). Inclusion of any accurate details in the confession gives the confession more credence (Appleby & Kassin, 2016) while more details increases confidence in a guilty verdict (at least measured with a mock jury) (Appleby, Hasel, & Kassin, 2013) and people are more likely to believe the self-reported statement of guilt (Appleby & Kassin, 2016). That is how people who falsely confess (either voluntarily or involuntarily) can still be found guilty and incarcerated when there is DNA evidence to the contrary. This may explain why people believe elaborate often unbelievable stories about combat heroism as told by military impersonators. It may be hard to believe that someone would lie about having committed atrocities, as some of these impersonators have 'confessed' to committing war crimes in Vietnam (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). As covered in the section concerning the legality of military impersonation, it is clear that this is not a uniquely American phenomenon. Just like there are laws penalizing military impersonation in

other countries, so are the veterans in foreign countries the ones who investigate similar claims of impersonation in their respective countries²².

The System

Having covered people intentionally trying to scam the system warrants a look at how the system is set up and how it approaches military impersonation. To impede morally wrong or criminal behavior, society requires suitable solid coherent statutes and impartial enforcement of those statutes. Having statutes which are not enforced does nothing to diminish the behavior which a statute is trying to curtail. The statutes concerning stolen valor/ military impersonation will be covered in the next chapter, however, if the statutes are enforced and if the system facilitates capture of imposters rather than (passively) supporting the behavior (due to a lack of action) is what is covered in this section.

Military organization. First, the organization of the United States military and the Department of Veterans Administration need to be understood. The US military is quite dissimilar to other countries' militaries, as it consists of five different branches which are considered separate entities, while other countries generally have one military divided into ground forces/ army, navy, and air force. The five branches of the US military are the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and the Coast Guard. This fragmentation is found in other sections of American society, such as the extraordinarily fragmented law enforcement system (McGarrell, Freihlich, & Chermak, 2007) with its estimated 18,000 agencies (Reaves, 2011). A person can enlist in active duty, where the

²² Some international websites which investigate claims of military impersonation are the following: US: <http://www.stolenvalor.com/team.cfm> & <http://guardianofvalor.com/mission/> ; UK: <https://thewaltercumpershunterclub.wordpress.com/> ; Australia: <http://www.anzmi.net/> ; Canada: <http://www.stolenvalour.ca/>

military is the person's fulltime employment, or in the reserves, also called the weekend warriors due to this being part-time employment and training occurring during the weekends. In the U.S. there is also a division between the federal level and state level military. The states have their own versions of the military, the National Guard. The state militaries can be used by the states as well as being appropriated by the Federal government²³ (MacLean & Elder, 2007) on foreign soil since the Federal Posse Comitatus act²⁴ (18 U.S.C. §1385) and a directive from the Secretary of Defense [Marine Corps & Navy] disallows the Federal government from using the military on U.S. soil (with few exceptions, like natural disasters). The different branches, each have their own uniforms, ranks, and in some cases awards. The rules concerning promotion are not always clear either, may differ per branch and for enlisted personnel versus officers, for training, and over time. It is therefore not surprising that many people have difficulty recognizing the correct uniform, rank, and awards a person wears or claims to have earned, even for people who serve in different branches and at different times.

Records request. Additionally to the previously mentioned problems, the lack of centralization in the U.S. military has generated obstacles when it comes to record keeping and expeditious replies to records requests for verification of claims made. Everybody can request military records through a freedom of information act (FOIA) request (Sterner, Sterner, & Mink, 2014). Certain data will be redacted, such as social security number and date of birth, however, the records still contain a lot of information, such as branch, rank, decorations, dates of service, and military education (the author performed several FOIA requests). However, where the FOIA request needs to be

²³ This appropriation occurred during the war on terror (MacLean & Elder, 2007)

²⁴ Army (1878) and Air Force (1956); 18 U.S. Code §1385

delivered differs per circumstances, such as the time the subject served and the branch they served in. It can take up to six weeks to receive a response to a FOIA request, with special faster response rates for law enforcement requests. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the organization tasked with maintaining archival records for the United States. This includes military records, which are housed at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC)²⁵ in St. Louis, Mo. The NPRC contains approximately 56 million case files and approximately 3.6 billion documents. The case files are called Official Military Personnel File (OMPF). These files contain among other documents the DD-214, and medical records of the veteran. However, a fire in 1973 destroyed 16-18 million OMPF files or 25 percent of the military records which were stored here. All branches were not affected equally. The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard lost no files since their files were housed in a different building. The Army was the most affected with losing 80 percent of the OMPF of veterans discharged between November 1, 1912 and January 1, 1960. The Air Force files lost 75 percent of its files from its establishment date on September 25, 1947 to January 1, 1964 with surnames after Hubbard (Sterner, Sterner, & Mink, 2014). Even for the files that burned there may be information on the veteran retrievable in the unit files. These files are kept in College Park, MD and contain for example hospital records and General Orders for the Army and Army Air Forces. General Orders are the orders which contain information on for example which people earned an award and when those awards were earned. Additionally, the branches maintain their own repositories, the Marine Corps' is located in Quantico, VA, the Air Force's is located at Maxwell Air Force Base, and the Navy

²⁵ <https://www.archives.gov/st-louis/>

Yard in Washington, DC. As stated, the system is not working in the favor of identifying military deception in society. It could be beneficial to have a database which can be accessed by civilians to check claims of military service and/or military awards.

Currently, the Department of Defense (DoD) states it is not feasible to create such a database (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, 2009; Sterner, Sterner, & Mink, 2014). This has been countered by researchers who have created partial databases (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Sterner, n.d.), such as the Medal of Honor (MOH) database which contains all recipients of the MOH but no other awards or OMPF data. Sterner (n.d.) stated in a response to the DoD claim against the creation of a database, that it is possible, refuting the claims of the DoD. It would be of great benefit to society to have a general database for military records (excluding private data such as a social security number) so military claims can be researched in a more rapid fashion. This could not only decrease false claims of military service; it could also increase historical accuracy.

Department of Veterans Affairs. Military files are transferred to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) when the veteran is discharged. The files are necessary to aid the VA in assessing benefit eligibility for veterans. The VA is the second largest federal department with over 340,000 employees located all over the United States (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2016). To make eligibility decisions, first the term ‘veteran’ needs to be defined. A veteran “for the purposes of VA health benefits and services, [is] a person who served in the active military service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable” (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.b). There is a minimum service period -- with some exceptions -- for eligibility. There are several groups who fit the enhanced eligibility requirements, such as

having a service connected disability, served in Vietnam, or the Persian Gulf, receive a VA pension, have received a Purple Heart or Medal of Honor, be a prisoner of war, or have a household income which falls below the VA's national income or geographical-adjusted thresholds (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.b). A veteran only has to fill out an application, and add any evidence (such as medical records) available to the application. Veterans apply for a disability rating which is awarded in increments of 10 percent to show how much benefits they should be awarded (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.c). The rates increase with an increase in disability rating and whether the veteran has dependents or not (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.c). This money is tax free (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Mossman, 1994). The VA receives more than one million benefit requests a year (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015 August). These requests for health care can be overwhelming to the VA. At one point, requests for mental health care were so large that the VA veterans suicide hotline has gone unanswered on multiple occasions in 2014 (Kime, 2016). The financial tax free benefits mean that there are financial benefits to malingering, and most importantly there is no incentive to get well (Mossman, 1994; Sparr & Pankratz, 1983). Several people have been identified to be either inflating their military service or out-right lying about having served at all (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Pankratz, 1990; Sparr & Pankratz, 1983). This is not only a problem for proper health care (Mossman, 1994), it is also a problem for research concerning PTSD (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Frueh, et al., 2005; McNally, 2003) (or any other malingered disorder) for which the VA is a great source due to its access to a large group of research subjects. Many therapists in the VA system do not believe that there is large scale malingering in the VA system and that they would

absolutely be able to identify a liar if they would encounter one (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). However, research has shown that most people may think that they are great at identifying imposters, in reality most people are not (Bond & Uysal, 2007; Ekman & O'Sullivan, 1991; O'Sullivan, Frank, Hurley, & Tiwana, 2009). Malingers are a problem in the system because they take away precious resources from people who really do suffer from service related disorders and need the help (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Frueh et al., 2005), as well as tainting research results (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). It also means that those malingerers may be misdiagnosed and receiving incorrect treatment for a problem they do not have. This does not coincide with the goal of psychiatric care, which is to "foster personal autonomy and responsibility" by the patient (Mossman, 1994, p.39). Admitting to malingering PTSD in the VA system may be detrimental for therapists and researchers (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). It has to be said that malingering is not limited to the VA system, it has been detected in private health care systems as well (Pankratz & Jackson, 1995).

Military decorations, uniforms, and rank. The military awards system is, as stated earlier, confusing at best. Not every branch has all the awards available and some awards are branch specific. In some cases, when the branches do all award the same awards, such as the Congressional Medal of Honor (MOH), the awards tend to look different from one another, which increases the difficulty in recognizing the awards. The same applies to uniforms. The uniforms differ from one branch to another, there are also several uniforms per branch which can only be worn under certain circumstances. Rank is another area where there is discrepancy between the branches. Although many of the ranks are similar, there are several ranks that may differ from one branch to another. For

example, a captain in the Navy and Coast Guard is on the same pay grade as a colonel in the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps. To measure and compare rank in the military, pay grade should be taken into account since these are identical for all branches.

Punishment. As stated earlier, statutes and punishment for illegal behavior are only useful under certain conditions. Psychological research into punishment, rewards, and reinforcement of behavior found that aversive stimuli (punishment) can decrease that behavior, if it is administered close to the occurrence of the actual behavior (Gleitman, Fridlund, & Reisberg, 1999). The same applies to rewarding prosocial/ legal behavior. It has the desired effect only when the reward occurs close after the behavior which should be rewarded (Gleitman, Fridlund, & Reisberg, 1999). If the punishment for military impersonation does not occur or does not occur close to the impersonating incidents, the behavior will not be terminated. This applies to many of the impersonators described by Burkett and Whitley (1998). Many do not receive any punishment or only very little punishment after discovery and in some cases they even seem to be rewarded for lying about their record by not being outed and having support within their families and veterans' organizations. The lack of a centralized contact point and a societal lack of knowledge of the military system, a lack of unification for ranks, insignia, and awards and medals, an awards database, the lack of checking official records before awarding benefits are all conducive to people scamming the system and getting away with it. The lack of punishment or the lack of timely punishment may also motivate people to commit or keep committing the same crime. Some small changes can be a great assistance here, for example using official records from the military before awarding benefits through the VA rather than allowing the veterans (or imposters) to bring their own versions of the

DD-214, which is easy to forge. The next chapter will explain the methodology used in the current study.

CHAPTER IV

Methods

The current study

The introduction and literature review chapters testify to the paucity of academic research on the topic of military impersonation. The only field that has any data on the topic is the legal field which concerned the dispute of the Stolen Valor Act of 2005's constitutionality more than anything else. The non-academic literature offers a wide range of behaviors and stories surrounding stolen valor offenders. The academic scarcity of data concerning this offense and behavior necessitates further research. This additional study is warranted as the offenders' behavior causes great disturbances to veterans and active duty personnel and the response in society to the actions of military impersonators is often significant. The current study intends to bring forth further information concerning the people who commit stolen valor. As there is little information currently available, this study, which is exploratory in nature, is intended to provide a foundation for future research on the subject as more data becomes available. The study, therefore, can have an impact on society, public policy, and government and private benefits.

Research questions

The lack of academic research data necessitates the need for an exploratory study (Withrow, 2014), which involves two research questions:

1. What are some of the characteristics of the people who pretend to have served in the military or who embellish their service history?
2. Is there a difference between the offenders who have served and the offenders who have completely falsified their service?

Analytic strategy and sample

Qualitative research methods. To answer the research questions, data concerning people who commit military impersonation is necessary. However, as there is a lack of previous research and data, a qualitative approach is better suited to research stolen valor, rather than a quantitative approach²⁶. Quantitative methods usually rely on the use of numbers to obtain an objective measurement to understand the data (Withrow, 2014) through use of deductive reasoning (Lichtman, 2014). To perform a quantitative analysis, a substantial amount of cases needs to be available. When few cases are available for analysis, other methods such as qualitative methods are warranted. Qualitative analysis uses inductive reasoning (Lichtman, 2014) to identify commonalities in the research data, and allows researchers to find the meaning of human behavior and the motivation for it. There is a certain depth attainable when qualitative methods are used, as opposed to quantitative methods which focusses more on a numerical analysis (Babbie, 2002; Withrow, 2014).

As with quantitative research methods, the validity and reliability of qualitative research methods needs to be ascertained (Babbie, 2002). Validity refers to a measurement tool actually measuring what it is stated to measure (Babbie, 2002). For example, does a thermometer actually measure temperature or does it measure something else. If the thermometer measures temperature the validity of the tool (i.e., the thermometer) is high, if it does not, the validity is low. According to Babbie (2002) the validity of qualitative research seems high as the data allow for in depth analysis. Reliability refers to if a test or research method reaches the same (or very similar) results

²⁶ The two previously mentioned approaches are the types of research that are generally performed in social science.

every time a measurement is taken. Going back to the thermometer example, if at measurement point one the temperature is 98.6°F, while at measurement point two (just a few minutes later) the temperature is 96.2°F, the reliability is low. If both measurement results would have been much nearer to one another, the reliability would be high. According to Babbie (2002) there could be potential reliability problems with qualitative research. One researcher may come to different conclusions concerning specific research data, as another researcher. Babbie (2002) suggests the researcher be conscious of this potential bias and subjectivity problem as everybody approaches life (and therefore research as well) from their own point of view.

As bias and subjectivity can be problematic with qualitative research, to reduce this possibility, neutrality, balance and fairness will be of the utmost importance (Patton, 2015). One way to increase neutrality is to take into account all the stolen valor cases available on the website rather than picking and choosing cases for analysis, while ignoring other cases. The current study will take into account all the cases available on the website and use content analysis and grounded theory to analyze the data.

Content analysis. There are different methods to perform qualitative research and content analysis is one of them²⁷. Content analysis is considered a classic analytical procedure for text data used to ascribe meaning to the data chosen for analysis (Flick, 2014). There are several steps to this analytical process according to Flick (2014) which are stated in the following figure (Figure 1).

²⁷ Some other options for qualitative research are case studies, and ethnographic studies.

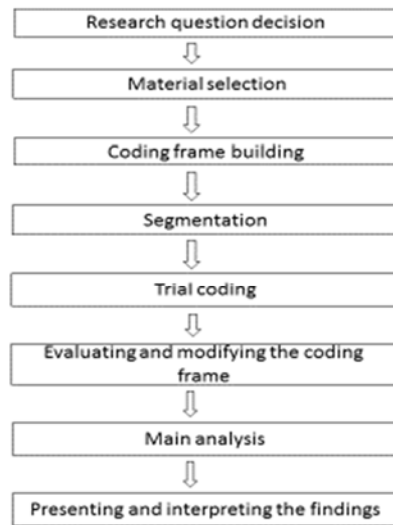


Figure 1. The content analysis process.

There are three techniques for content analysis, according to Flick (2014), summarizing content analysis, explicative content analysis, and structuring content analysis. Summarizing content analysis comes down to discounting statements which are paraphrased or are made more than once, after which the statements are generalized while keeping the original meaning. Explicative content analysis does the opposite, it clarifies statements which are unclear, either through looking to the rest of the statement or by examining official definitions. Structuring content analysis concerns discovering formal structures in the data (Flick, 2014). For the current study, content analysis will be used, however, when possible, it will be mixed with the grounded theory methodology.

Grounded theory. Grounded theory “is inductively generated from fieldwork, that is, theory that emerges from the researcher’s observations and interviews out in the real world rather than in the laboratory or the academy” (Patton, 2015, p.18). This means that data is used to derive a theory of the phenomenon studied (Babbie, 2002; Charmaz,

2004; Glaser & Strauss, 2008; Jupp, 1989), rather than starting with a theory and analyzing the data to confirm or disprove a theory.

Online data. The internet has been a popular tool for use in the general population and has increasingly been relied on as a research instrument for more than a decade (Flick, 2014; Kraut et al., 2004). It is therefore not surprising that online publically available data is collected for analysis. Online data has advantages, such as lower costs and in certain circumstances a higher rate of participation. Online data are readily available and numerous research subjects can be reached at once (Flick, 2014). Online available data may also be free from socially acceptable adjusted answers as at times is likely to occur during interviews or surveys.

At the same time there are certain drawbacks to using internet data. The quality of the online data can be compromised, which causes generalizability concerns for the results which is noted by Kraut et al. (2004) as well as Withrow (2014). The data from the current sample may differ from the population and may therefore be biased and not generalizable to the U.S. population or even the military impersonators population. A randomized sample would have alleviated this problem (Withrow, 2014), however, since there is no larger data set to retrieve a sample from, it is impossible to collect a randomized sample for the current study.

Another disadvantage of online data is that it is unclear who utilizes the internet, who is reached and who is not (Flick, 2014). This may be relevant in the current study, as people need internet access to find the website used for analysis to make a notification of a stolen valor case. Although rare in the United States, if a person does not have internet access, they cannot notify the website and the website personnel cannot start an

investigation and publicize the results. This means that there may be some generalizability problems where the results may not be applicable to all of the population studied. Lacking previous research, there is no known stolen valor offenders database. Therefore, since many cases are publicized online, some of these online data are used for the current study.

Data. As there is no database with stolen valor offenders, a database needs to be created. To do so the purposeful sampling technique with a small adaptation was used. Purposeful sampling means that cases are chosen for their richness in information concerning the topic of study and therefore can give much insight (Patton, 2015). In this study all stolen valor offenders from a website were taken into account rather than just the most information rich cases.

There are several websites dedicated to exposing military impersonators. For this study the Guardian of Valor website²⁸ (from here on the Guardian of Valor website will be referred to as GoV) stolen valor database was used. Due to a lack of control over the data-collection process, as the website personnel collect the data, not a researcher, and the motive for collection is therefore different as well, there may be some complications with the data (Kraut et al., 2004). To counteract some of these complications, the data from the website were verified by online searches of the offenders mentioned on the GoV website to corroborate the offenders' stolen valor history. Of all the 68 offenders, 63 had non-Guardian-of-Valor links which substantiated their status as stolen valor offenders. At times when it was necessary, due to little information on some of the offenders on the GoV website, additional research was performed concerning specific offenders. These

²⁸ The Guardian of Valor website can be found at <http://guardianofvalor.com/hall-of-shame/>

searches were performed online and the data were collected from sources other than the GoV website.

The online data is not perfect, as the people behind the site make decisions on which cases are published and which cases have not been substantiated and will therefore not be published. The GoV website states that it receives around fifty inquiries a week concerning stolen valor, however, no data is published on anyone until there is certainty beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused really did falsify their military record. To date (June 2016) the GoV website has published the names and cases of 68 offenders. Although the files did not all contain identical data, many cases contained official military records or the official government response to the Freedom of Information Act request (from here on a Freedom of Information Act request will be referred to as FOIA) showing no military record could be located. In some cases, official criminal justice system records have also been published on the site. These data were used to create a database. The sample collected is a non-randomized sample as there is no possibility to randomly pick cases from the stolen valor offender population in general, which means that the results cannot be generalized to the greater stolen valor offender population. The current study does not allow for causality to be determined as it is a non-experimental study (Warner, 2013). The variables of the study are discussed in the following section.

Variables. To study who the people are who fabricate their military service, several factors from the offender stories were obtained and analyzed. The following are the variables which were obtained (See table 3). For the offender the following variables were available on the GoV website: variables on the individual – Name (which was not used in the analysis); Sex; Race/ Ethnicity. Race in this study consists of Caucasian,

Black, and Asian, while ethnicity is considered separate from race and concerns whether the offender is of Hispanic decent or not. Variables concerning actual military service – Have they actually served and if so what was the length of their service; Which branch did they serve in; What was their paygrade; and did they go AWOL (Away WithOut Leave) during their service. Fictitious service variables were: Which branch did the fictitious service take place in; What was the claimed paygrade; What was the length of their assumed service; Did the offenders wear a uniform and if so, did they wear the uniform correctly (e.g., wrong rank, patches, and branch).

Paygrade is used in this data set rather than rank due to the inconsistencies between ranks of the same title between the different branches. For example, a Captain in the Navy has earned a higher paygrade than a Captain in the Army. Therefore, using rank can confound the data. Paygrade is more consistent over the branches and will therefore be used (see Appendix E for the paygrades and ranks in the branches).

Further variables were: Which unit did they falsely claim to serve in? Did they claim to have served overseas and did they claim combat and/or combat injuries? Did the subjects claim to have lived through an incident that received a great deal of media attention? Did they earn awards if they served and did they claim to have earned awards? Did they commit fraud? Did they commit any crimes other than the military impersonation? If so, which types of crimes did they commit? Was an arrest made in the stolen valor cases? If there was, what was the disposition of the case? Were further lies known concerning anything non-military? This was to see if the deceitfulness was something that was common or only related to their military record. If it is more pervasive the consequences could be different for the person than if the lying is an

integral part of their lifestyle. Are official military and criminal justice system files posted on the website? The military files which were available often consisted of DD-214, also the military separation papers, or FOIA request results if no military records were found by the government as a result of the request.

Lastly, did the subjects have any military tattoos? Did they admit to lying about their military record? Did they have veteran license plates? Did they (try to) join a veteran organization, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)? Did the subjects claim that their records were unavailable due to them being declared classified or secret? If they claimed to have been wounded, which mental disorders did they claim to have developed during their service?

Table 3

Variables used in the current study

General group	Variables
Personal	Case ID
	Name
	Sex
	Race
	Ethnicity
Authentic service	Served
	Branch
	Paygrade
	Length of service
	Did they go AWOL?

(continued)

General group	Variables
Fictitious service	Branch Paygrade Length of service Wore a uniform Wore the uniform incorrectly
Unit	Did they pretend to be special forces/ Green Berets? Did they pretend to be Rangers? Did they pretend to be Airborne? Did they pretend to be Navy SEALs? Did they pretend to be part of another unit?
Duty	Did they claim overseas duty? If so, how many tours did they claim? Did they claim to have been in combat? Did they claim combat wounds? Did they claim to be part of a famous event?
Awards	Did they pretend to have earned awards? Did they earn awards? Medal of Honor Silver Star Bronze Star Medal Bronze Star Medal for Valor

(continued)

General group	Variables
	Combat Infantryman's Badge
	Combat Action Badge
	Combat Action Ribbon
	Purple Heart
	Distinguished Flying Cross
	Navy Cross
	Distinguished Service Cross
	Air Force Cross
	Other
Fraud	Did they have a fake ID?
	Did they have/claim to have a VA application?
	Did they commit financial fraud?
	If so, was the fraud committed against public or private
	organizations/ people?
	Did they falsify documents?
	Did they steal anyone's identity?
Crime	Criminal history/ Previous arrests
	If so, what kind of crimes?
	Were they arrested for the military impersonation?
	If so, what was the case disposition?
Lying	Were they lying about non-military factors?

(continued)

General group	Variables
Online data availability	Were their military files posted online?
	Was any official criminal justice system data posted online?
Other	Did they start a veteran charity for nefarious purposes?
	Did they apologize for the military impersonation?
	Do they want their story taken off of the GoV website?
	Are there other online sources about their impersonations?
	Do they have military tattoos?
	Did they admit to lying about their military history?
	Did they receive veterans license plates?
	Did they (try to) join veteran organizations?
	Did they claim their files were classified?
	Which mental disorders did they claim?

CHAPTER V

Findings

The findings will be covered in three different sections. First covered will be the scant demographic data available on the website. The variables covered are: sex, race, and ethnicity. The second section will cover online and crime variables availability. The third section will cover the military variables.

Demographic data

Sex. There are 68 people on the GoV website and most of them (N=63; 92.6%) are males, while the remainder are females (N=5; 7.4%). It is not surprising that there are more males impersonating military personnel than females as there are more males who enlist than females. As of June 2016, 15.88% of military personnel was female (U.S. Department of Defense, 2016b).

Race/ Ethnicity. Of the 68 impersonators in the current sample, most were Caucasian (N=61, 89.71%). This includes White Hispanics as Hispanic in the current study is considered an ethnicity and not a race and is analyzed separately. Few of the impersonators were Black (N=5, 7.35%), while none were Asian. For two people (2.94%) the race could not be ascertained. Ethnically, four people (5.88%) are of Hispanic descent.

This division differs from what may be expected from the general public and the military racial and ethnic divisions. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.b.), on July 1, 2015 the U.S. population consisted of 77.1 percent people who reported being White only, 13.3 percent who reported being Black only, and 5.6 percent who reported being Asian only. The rest of the people reported other races, or more than one race. Hispanics

made up 17.6% of the population, regardless of race. The military, in 2014, consisted of 71.0 percent Caucasians, 16.8 percent Black people, and 3.8 percent Asians (Office of the Deputy, n.d.). These data show that Caucasian people are overrepresented in the current sample, as compared to both the general population and the military population.

Online & crime variables availability

Online articles or media. To verify that the impersonators had really committed stolen valor, as opposed to being a figment of someone's imagination who then would have posted the impersonators' names on the GoV website, an online search was performed for these subjects. For 63 subjects other online sources were discovered, while for five subjects this was not the case. The other articles were either other veteran communities outing the person or news sites which posted outing videos and articles about the subjects or sometimes interviews with the impersonator before they were exposed as military impersonators. One of the subjects was a contestant on the television show American Idol. The show told his story of heroic military service in Iraq. His colleagues who served with him in Iraq disagreed and stated he lied. The contestant later apologized for his false statements which he claimed were taken out of context by the show for ratings.

Military online file data. The website posts available evidence (such as photos, emails, forged documents, and military and criminal file data) and to prove or disprove military service the organization generally requests the suspected impersonator's military records. If the person has served GoV should get a response which contains the military history information. If the person has not served there may be a response stating that no records were found. In 27 cases the military records that GoV received were posted on

the website. In four cases a negative response was posted, with one of these responses being an exchange with army CID rather than NARA (National Archives and Records Administration). For 37 people no positive nor a negative response to the FOIA records request were posted online.

Criminal justice records data. Not only were military records posted online when they were available, criminal justice records were posted online in some cases. Ten impersonators had a criminal justice record on the site. Court records were most often posted (N=5, 7.35%), followed by booking records (N=3, 4.41%), and corrections or criminal records (both of which had an N=1, 1.47%). In most cases no criminal justice system records were posted (N=58, 85.29%).

Crime data. Occasionally data were available concerning crimes committed by impersonators (official records, as well as non-official sources). Official criminal justice system records were only available in ten cases, however, some unofficial data concerning the impersonators' criminal history was available online. For 41 subjects no official nor unofficial data was available. For 27 (39.71%) of the impersonators some previous arrest data was available. One of these cases concerned crimes that were committed during the offender's military service (for the sale of steroids), the rest (N=26, 38.24%) were all committed in the civilian world. The crimes committed cover a wide range, exhibiting these offenders' tendencies to be generalists and not specialists. Often the offenders have committed crimes before impersonating military personnel as well as after (see table 4). Many people have committed more than one crime. For the current study eight crime categories were created to combine several of the charges when the criminal charges displayed sufficient commonality.

First the violent crimes category, which contain the violent crimes (such as assault) as well as harassment. There were eleven (16.18%) violent crimes committed. The following category was fraud which contains, fraud, identity theft, forgery, and falsifying concealed carry licenses. Fraud is separate category from financial crimes as fraud does not necessarily have to include financial gain, although it often does, for example in the case of identity theft. The fraud category contained eleven (16.18%) cases. The next category contains financial crimes, such as financial, burglary, theft, larceny, and writing bad checks. Ten (14.71%) of the crimes fell in this category. Traffic crimes were committed six times (8.82%) by military impersonators.

Five (7.35%) military career deceivers committed sexual crimes aside from their military impersonation. This category is interesting as several of the impersonators used their fabricated service to proposition women. One of the military impersonators was a conman nicknamed Casanova Jeffrey by the media because he would create different profiles with different professions on dating sites to impress women and to bilk the women out of their (financial) resources. One of the professions he selected was that of military sniper with four combat jumps (which is an extremely rare occurrence if it takes place at all).

The category of impersonation contained several employment types which were used by the imitators: federal agent/ officer, law enforcement, and stolen valor (see table 4). Five (7.35%) people had committed these crimes. The other category (N=5, 7.35%) contained a wide range of crimes, including failure to appear, bigamy, false reports, felony (with no other explanation), and possession of a firearm. The smallest category

consisted of drug crimes, as only three (4.41%) people had committed drug related offenses.

When looking into the service record of the impersonators who committed sexual crimes and harassment/ violent crimes, it became clear that, of the five people who committed sexual crimes, four did not serve, while the other person's service history is unknown. For the violent crimes/ harassment category, out of ten impersonators (one committed both a violent crime and harassment and is counted only once) four had served and six had no service history. As shown in the literature, some people fabricate their military service to gain sympathy from the courts to reduce sentences. This may lead to these people being released earlier than would be safe for the victims. This is especially egregious in cases where the offender did not actually serve and therefore did not deserve the sympathy in the first place.

Table 4

Other crimes committed by military impersonators

Crime type	Frequency	Percentage	Note
Fraud	11	16.18	Fraud, Identity theft, forgery, falsifying concealed carry licenses
Violent	11	16.18	Violent, harassment
Financial	10	14.71	Financial, burglary, theft, writing a bad check
Traffic	6	8.82	
Sexual	5	7.35	
Impersonation	5	7.35	Federal officer/ agent, and law enforcement
Other	5	7.35	Failure to appear, bigamy, false reports, felony, firearm possession
Drugs	3	4.41	

Arrests were made in nineteen (27.94%) of the military impersonation cases. For eleven (16.18%) of these cases a case disposition was published. Eight (11.76%) people had plead guilty, one (1.47%) was investigated, one (1.47%) was found guilty, and one (1.47%) was released without bail pending further court action. For seven of these cases a sentence was known. Generally, a combination of punishments was given to the offender (see table 5). These punishments cover a range of penalties, e.g. incarceration (N=5, 7.35%) with time ranging between 10 months and 140 months. Three (4.41%) people were ordered to get mental health counseling. Probation was part of the sentence for three (4.41%) offenders and ranged in time from one to five years. Supervised release was ordered for three (4.41%) offenders and ranged in time from three years to a lifetime. Restitution was ordered in three (4.41%) cases. Two (2.94%) people had to turn over all their military equipment or were banned from wearing any military attire. One (1.47%) person was confined to his residence on veterans and memorial day. One (1.47%) person was not permitted to own firearms anymore, one (1.47%) received a suspended fine, and one (1.47%) received 150 hours community service.

Table 5

Stolen valor sentences

Sentences	Frequency	Percentage	Time
Incarceration	5	7.35	10-140 months
Mental health counseling	3	4.41	
Probation	3	4.41	1-5 years
Supervised release	3	4.41	3 years – lifetime
Restitution	3	4.41	
Turnover/ banned from military equipment	2	2.94	
Residential confinement on veterans & memorial day	1	1.47	
No firearms	1	1.47	
Suspended fine	1	1.47	
Community hours	1	1.47	150 hours

Military variables

Service. It may seem to make sense that only people who have not served in the military will falsify their service record, as a veteran should not have to fabricate a service record. However, that is inaccurate. Most people, in the current sample, who commit military impersonation have some military service in their history, yet many people who have served seem less than impressed with their actual service and therefore fabricate a more impressive military resume. In many cases this means that the offenders suddenly have become special forces/ Green Berets, or Navy SEALs, or have landed

some other hardcore combat function as opposed to being a food or health care specialist, or part of the motor pool for example. One person who attempted to enlist did not succeed (he failed the entrance test) and stated that enlisting was a life-long dream and that was why he impersonated a soldier. Another person was ashamed of failing his basic training and therefore decided to pretend to be special forces, a Ranger, and a sniper.

Of all 68 impersonators, 21 (30.88%) did not serve and completely fabricated their military history, while for 8 (11.76%) a service history was unknown. That leaves 39 (57.35%) for which a service history could be located. This service history ranges from a few days, which means people failed out of boot camp, to fulfillment of their contracts. That not all of the service was fulfilled honorably was highlighted by the fact that several of the people (N=5, 12.82% of people who served) who did not serve their full contracts went AWOL (Away WithOut Leave) during their service effectively ending their careers in most cases.

Branches. Most people with a military history who served did so in the U.S. Army (N=21, 53.85% of the people who served), which is not remarkable as the Army is largest of the five branches. The U.S. Marine Corps (N=5, 12.82% of people who served) was the second most common branch with personnel who embellished their military record. When compared to the division of personnel in the four Department of Defense branches (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force) it becomes clear that the division is slanted. The military personnel in 2014 was divided among the branches as follows: 38.0 percent Army, 24.2 percent Navy, 23.6 percent Air Force, and 14.2 percent Marine Corps (Office of the Deputy, n.d.). This distribution demonstrates that more people who served (for whatever the length) in the Army embellished their service (at least in the current

sample). The following is a list of the other branches people served in. In some cases, people served in more than one branch, and will be listed as such. All of the branches on the list had only one (2.56%) person serve there. Navy and Army, Air Force, Army National Guard, Tennessee Army National Guard, New York National Guard, Navy, Montana Army National Guard, Navy Reserves, Air Force and Air National Guard, Army and National Guard, and National Guard. One person skipped from one branch to the next and ended up in four branches, U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, New Jersey National Guard which led him back to the U.S. Army. Not a single person in the current sample had served in the U.S. Coast Guard.

Paygrade. Instead of using rank, due to differences between branches, paygrade is adopted in the current study. Use of paygrade facilitates comparison between the impersonators as it is similar to rank. Most of the people who served left the service as an E1 (N=14, 35.90%), which is the lowest enlisted rank attainable. E2 (5.13%) was the paygrade of two people, E3 of five (12.82%), E4 and E5 had four (10.26%) people each, E6 and E7 each had one (2.56%) person who embellished their service. For eight people (20.51%) the paygrade was unknown. Not a single person who embellished their service in this sample had attained a warrant officer or officer paygrade. In the military enlisted personnel make up the largest part of personnel (83.3% vs. 17.7% officers in 2014; Office of the Deputy, n.d.), which is different from the current sample which contains no officers at all. In the current study, most people had the E1 paygrade (35.9%), while in the military E4 and E5 are the most common paygrades (20.3% & 17.1% respectively; Office of the Deputy, n.d.).

Length of service. Service length was unknown for four people (10.26%), for eleven (28.21%) their service period was less than two years, which is generally less than the average service contract. Four years (N=5, 12.82%) was the most common service length. The service period ranged from two weeks to seventeen years and eight and a half months. During their service, 24 people (61.54%) earned awards. For 6 (15.38%) it is unknown if they earned any awards during their service, while 9 people (23.08%) did not earn any awards. This last group most likely consists of the people who served for only a short amount of time.

Fictitious service. The previous section covered the people who had served. This section will cover the same variables (and a few extra variables), with the difference that this section contains the fabricated data.

Branches. The feigned branches have a different distribution from the actual service branches (for a comparison see table 6). Most people pretended to have served in the U.S. Army (N=42, 61.76%). The U.S. Marine Corps had eight (11.76%) fabricators in the current sample. The U.S. Navy had three (4.41%), while the U.S. Air Force had only two pretenders (2.94%). The Tennessee Army National Guard was the victim of one impostor (1.47%). For some people fictitious service in one branch was not enough and they fabricated a military career in two branches. Three people (4.41%) concocted a service history in the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps. The combination of U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force occurred twice (2.94%), while the following combinations of services had only one impersonator (1.47%) each: U.S. Marine Corps & U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Marine Corps & U.S. Navy, U.S. Navy & U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Army &

U.S. Army Reserves. For three people (4.41%) it was unknown which branch (or branches) they fabricated their service in.

Table 6

Actual branch versus fictitious branch

Branches	Frequency real	Frequency fictitious
Army	21	42
Marine Corps	5	8
Navy	1	3
Air Force	1	2
Coast Guard	0	0
Navy Reserves	1	0
National Guard	1	0
Montana Army National Guard	1	0
New York National Guard	1	0
Tennessee National Guard	1	1
Air Force & Air National Guard	1	0
Army & National Guard	1	0
Navy & Army	1	0
Army & Army Reserves	0	1
Army & Marine Corps	0	3
Marine Corps & Coast Guard	0	1
Marine Corps & Navy	0	1
Army & Air Force	0	2
Navy & Air Force	0	1
Unknown	8	3
Not Served	21	0

Paygrade. The highest fabricated paygrade, not surprisingly, differs from the real paygrades people earned (for a comparison between the actual service branches and the fictitious service branches see table 6). Not a single person proclaimed to be enlisted personnel with paygrades E1, E2, or E3. However, the higher enlisted paygrades proved more popular (N=38, 55.88%), with E5 (N=11, 16.18%) being the most prevalent. Furthermore, as opposed to the actual service paygrade category, there were seven officer impersonators (10.29%) (see table 7).

Table 7

Real paygrade versus fictitious paygrades

Paygrades	Frequency real	Frequency fictitious	2014 DoD data
E1	14 (45.16%)	0	3.5%
E2	2 (6.45%)	0	5.0%
E3	5 (16.13%)	0	14.4%
E4	4 (12.90%)	2 (2.94%)	20.3%
E5	4 (12.90%)	11 (16.18%)	17.1%
E6	1 (3.23%)	8 (11.76%)	12.0%
E7	1 (3.23%)	9 (13.24%)	7.1%
E8	0	5 (7.35%)	2.1%
E9	0	3 (4.41%)	0.8%
O1	0	0	1.8%
O2	0	1 (1.47%)	2.3%
O3	0	4 (5.88%)	5.8%

(continued)

Paygrades	Frequency real	Frequency fictitious	2014 DoD data
O4	0	0	3.4%
O5	0	0	2.1%
O6	0	0	0.9%
O7	0	2 (2.94%)	0.0%
O8	0	0	0.0%
O9	0	0	0.0%
O10	0	0	0.0%
Unknown	16	23	
Not served	21		

Length of claimed service. When fabricating military service, some impersonators also purport a lengthy service. The longest fictitious service was for 33 years, while the shortest was for one year. At the same time, of the people who actually served only three people (of 29 total, 10.34%) served ten years or longer. The fictional length of service is considerably longer. Of the eighteen people for whom length of service data is available, nine (50.00%) stated serving ten years or longer.

Uniform. One aspect which generally alerts people to military impersonators is seeing them in uniform. There are several videos online in which people (usually veterans) see somebody wearing a uniform which is just not quite right. In many cases when these people are confronted they turn out to be impersonators who cannot answer simple questions about their service such as what their MOS (Military Occupation Specialty) or job is, or where they are stationed, or the number of their special forces

graduation class (in case they feign special forces). Over half the current sample (N=38, 55.88%) have been caught wearing a uniform. At least twenty of the uniformed impersonators (52.63%) have worn their uniform incorrectly. Incorrectly can mean having their decorations in the wrong order, wearing patches in the wrong place, wearing pieces of different uniforms or even of uniforms of different branches, wearing colored shirts under their uniform which are not permitted, etc.

Units. Military impersonators or embellishers often fabricate being a member of the units which are known to be some of the most hardcore combat units, or the special forces (e.g., Green Berets in the Army, Navy SEALs in the Navy). Fabricating a special forces (of any branch) history is popular (28 people imagined being Special Forces or Green Berets, 4 imagined to be Navy SEALs, and 28 imagined being Rangers), and the most common special forces units are also the ones that seem to receive the most amount of media attention. Many books and media articles have been written about the work of the Green Berets and the Navy SEALs. Lately, the Navy SEALs specifically have received their fair share of media attention (and many (ex-) members have authored accounts of their own service) after one of their teams was responsible for eliminating Osama Bin Laden. The current sample contained few Navy SEALs (N=4, 5.88%), which differs from anecdotal literature (Burkett & Whitley, 1998), but there is a large group of Special Forces/ Green Berets impersonators (N=28, 41.18%) in this sample. Even the PJ's (Air Force Pararescue) have an impersonator in the current sample. The only special forces unit which lacked an impersonator and which simultaneously is not distinctly visible in the media is MARSOC, the Marine Corps special forces.

For several people being a member of one special forces group is not satisfying enough, they have to be members of more than one group. Most common was the combination of both Special Forces/ Green Berets and Rangers (N=17, 25.00%). Some of the job titles and/or units impersonated were snipers (which nine people claimed to be), being part of the 82nd airborne (N=4). Two people claimed air assault, EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), and Recon each. The following titles had one claim each by an impersonator: Pathfinder, tactical parachute instructor, combat medic, 2nd Recon Battalion, 1st CAV, Delta Force, Jungle expert, Air Force Pararescue (PJ), CAV scout, and combat engineer.

Combat & Combat wounds. With special forces come combat and combat wounds. When people envision a military history for themselves (or in some cases for others), they often claim to have experienced combat and having been wounded during combat. These fabulists may do so to feel and convey their physical and mental toughness, as well as receive admiration, or to receive financial assistance from public or private organizations or people. Fifty (73.53%) people claim deployments, ranging in quantities from once to fifteen. At least one deployment (N=18) was most prevalent, followed by at least two deployments (N=10). Fifty-two people (76.47%) claimed combat experience. Yet only 34 (50.00%) make statements concerning combat related injuries. In the current sample, several people claimed to have been blown up by IED's (Improvised Explosive Device) during deployments.

Mental health injuries. The injury complaints often relate to PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; N=11, 16.18%) and TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury; N=5, 7.35%), both difficult to diagnose injuries which, if a diagnosis is made, can lead to large

sums of disability payments from the VA. Some other psychological problems mentioned by the impersonators are substance abuse (N=1, 1.47%), depression (N=1, 1.47%), anxiety disorder (N=1, 1.47%), Gulf War syndrome (N=1, 1.47%), sleep problems (N=1, 1.47%), and suicide attempt (N=1, 1.47%). Most people who make service connected mental health claims, in the current study, did serve (PTSD 8 out of 11, all people who claimed other disorders had served, except for the person who received many different diagnoses). There were two special cases worth mentioning, one was a person who had been given several psychiatric diagnoses (bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, ADHD, and PTSD) and had been involuntarily committed repeatedly. He had never served. The second case concerns one of the impersonators claiming MPD (Multiple Personality Disorder) as an excuse to explain why he lied about his military service, ‘it was not really him, it was another personality that did that’.

Event survivors. Mention needs to be made concerning the cases where some people claim to have experienced well-known deadly military events, such as the Scud missile attack on USAF airbase in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia in 1991 in which 29 people were killed and 99 wounded²⁹, or the rescue of Jessica Lynch in Iraq in 2003³⁰. Two people claimed to have survived the Beirut Marine barracks bombing in Lebanon in

²⁹ The Scud missile attack on Dhahran, Saudi Arabia occurred on February 25, 1991. During the Persian Gulf War, Iraqi forces fired a Scud missile on the UASF airbase in Dhahran. The missile hit barracks in which British and American forces were housed. Twenty-nine people perished in the attack, while another 99 were wounded.

³⁰ Jessica Lynch was an army Private First Class during the Iraq war in 2003. On March 23, 2003 during the Battle of Nasiriya, an ambush of the American Forces occurred. Eleven of the U.S. forces were killed, while Jessica Lynch was severely injured when her Humvee crashed. During the ambush, she was captured by Iraqi forces. Lynch was held captive at Saddam Hospital in Nasiriya before being rescued by U.S. special forces on April 1, 2003. During her rescue the bodies of eight U.S. soldiers were also retrieved. She received a Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, and a Prisoner of War Medal.

1983³¹, which killed over 300 people, most of them U.S. military personnel. These are cases which are fairly easy to confirm since there is a fair amount of data on these events. Meanwhile, there are still survivors and relatives of the victims alive who know the truth and do not take kindly to people taking advantage of the plight of their loved ones.

Unearned awards. People claim to have earned awards which in reality they have not been awarded. However, the people who embellish their service may have earned awards during their service (if they managed to stay in the military longer than a few months). In the current sample, 24 (35.29%) people have actually earned any service related awards, while 39 (57.35%) people made up earning awards. The highest award attainable in the military is the Medal of Honor, which has the best legal protections as compared to the other awards. Nobody claimed to have earned the Medal of Honor in the current sample. This is contrary to some of the anecdotal literature on stolen valor which found impersonators claiming to have been awarded the medal of honor (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). The second highest awards are the crosses (i.e., Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, and Air Force Cross). Nobody fabricated earning the Air Force Cross in the current sample, however, two (2.94%) people pretended earning the Distinguished Service Cross and one person (1.47%) claimed to have earned the Navy Cross. The most commonly used awards for impersonation purposes were the Silver Star (N=10, 14.71%), the Bronze Star Medal (for valor [N=5, 7.35%] and without valor [N=8, 11.76%]), and

³¹ The Beirut Marine Barracks bombings occurred on October 23, 1983 in Beirut, Lebanon during the Lebanese Civil War. That day two truck bombs, with the equivalent of 21,000 pound of TNT, were exploded by suicide bombers at military barracks. The suicide bombings were claimed by the Islamic Jihad as a way to get the international forces out of Lebanon. In the attacks, 305 people were killed (excluding the suicide bombers), of which 241 were U.S. forces (220 USMC, 18 Navy, and 3 Army), 58 were French, and 6 were civilians, and 163 people were injured (180 U.S. personnel, 15 French, and 20 Lebanese civilians). For the U.S. this was the single deadliest day for the USMC since the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II, and for all the Armed Forces since the Vietnam Tet offensive. For the French it was the worst loss since the Algerian War.

the Purple Heart (N=25, 36.76%). Often the impersonators did not only claim to have 'received' one award but multiple, for example several silver stars instead of one in combination with all the other awards which were claimed.

One of the impersonators was very creative with 'his' awards and pretended to have a rare CIA award, the Intelligence Star Medal, as well as military awards. The Intelligence Star Medal is equivalent in value to the Silver Star. In several cases offenders were not aware of the actual regulations concerning the awards they claimed to have received. The accounts explaining why they received certain awards, greatly differ from the actual regulations for awarding these medals. One person, for example, claimed a Purple Heart (PH). The PH is only awarded under specific circumstances regarding being wounded by an enemy. It is therefore sometimes referred to as an enemy marksmanship badge. One of the impersonators, however, claimed to have received the Purple Heart for helping search for survivors in the rubble of the previously mentioned Beirut barracks bombing in 1983.

Another example is the fabricator who claimed to have been awarded a Silver Star medal by medical personnel. This award in reality is not given to anyone by medical personnel. It is awarded to people who have gone above and beyond during combat (the behavior has to be considered more valorous than the Bronze Star Medal for valor, but falls a level below the Distinguished Service Medals). This impersonator could not have received the Silver Star since she never served in combat which is a pre-requisite for being awarded any of the valor awards. One last group of ribbons, which display a person's combat experience, was also claimed often. The awards are the CIB (Combat Infantryman's Badge - Army), CAB (Combat Action Badge - Army), and the CAR

(Combat Action Ribbon – Navy & Marine Corps). The CIB was the most commonly claimed combat ribbon (N=17, 25.00%), followed by the CAB (N=3, 4.41%), and lastly the CAR (N=2, 2.94%).

Stolen valor and financial gain. It is illegal to falsify documents as well as impersonation military personnel for financial gain. According to the Supreme Court lying about military service is protected by the First Amendment when the impersonator does not commit other crimes related to the impersonation, as evidenced by the Supreme Court invalidation of the Stolen Valor Act of 2005. In the current sample it becomes clear that the Supreme Court protects a group of people who have communicated their falsified military history while not committing another crime such as financially defrauding people or falsifying documents. For 37 (54.41%) people it could be ascertained that financial gain was a factor in their motivation to impersonate military personnel. That means that for 31 (45.59%) people a financial gain motive could not be ascertained from the information on the website. The latter group is now protected by the First Amendment, because their actions do not surpass fabricating their military history, as opposed to the former group where financial benefits were a substantial factor for their military career lies.

Only twenty (29.41%) of the subjects used a fake form of identification (e.g., military ID, driver's license, certificates). Eighteen people (26.47%) falsified documents. A popular document for falsification, due to ease and importance, is the DD214 (the military separation document). The DD214 is generally used to verify military service for federal government agencies, state agencies, or private charities. In one case a person had

bought a DD214, likely from someone in the military. According to an investigator on this particular case that DD214 was one of the best falsifications he had ever seen.

Falsifying documents is not the only crime impersonators have committed. Some individuals have actually stolen the identity of real veterans or service members going as far as stealing the identity of deceased military personnel. One person stole the identity of a fallen Marine, with the purpose of attracting women. Another did the same to a fallen Green Beret, also to meet women. Four people (5.88%) stole identities, while two (2.94%) people “borrowed” stories which occurred to other people.

The DD214 can be a form of evidence to prove service to attain veteran license plates. License plates are state regulated and the veteran plates allow people traffic related financial benefits. Four people (5.88%) in the current study claimed veteran license plates. One of these plates was a disabled veteran plate, and another was a Purple Heart license plate which only recipients of the award should be capable of receiving. Of these four people, two (50.00%) had no service record and therefore have absolutely no claim to such license plates.

Another way some people try to convince the general population that they really did serve, and that they really were special forces, is by getting a military related tattoo. Nine people (13.24%) in this sample had military tattoos. Of these nine people, five (55.56%) had served, but often got tattoos of units they did not serve in. For example, some people had the Ranger tab tattooed on themselves while never having served as a Ranger. For one person (11.11%) the service record is unknown. The other three impersonators (33.33%) did not serve and therefore should not have any military unit tattoos. Veterans and active duty personnel generally frown upon civilians obtaining

military tattoos of units they did not serve in, especially if the tattoo is used for financial fraud.

Financial gain. In the current sample most people who financially benefitted from their lies did so in a private setting (N=23, 33.82%). Private in the current study pertains to any organization not related to the government and private citizens. Public refers to any government organization. Twelve people (17.65%) tried to defraud public organizations. In two cases (2.94%) people tried to defraud both private and public organizations. One of the organizations thought to be a significant and easy target for fraud is the Veterans Administration (VA). In the current study, only 17 (25.00%) people had made statements concerning a VA application. Of these people, 13 (76.47%) had served in the military (although many of them claimed injuries such as TBI, or PTSD while they did not serve long enough or did not serve in a combat zone and therefore would not be able to sustain a traumatic combat injury like a TBI or PTSD), one person (5.88%) did not serve, and for three (17.65%) their service history is unknown. Of the 13 people who did serve and claimed VA benefits, only four (30.77%) served more than three years. For the remainder service length is either unknown (N=2, 15.38%), or fewer than three years (N=7, 53.85%). If service length is short, the service member generally does not acquire VA benefit rights. This largely depends on the discharge status. For example, if a person is wounded in combat after serving for two years the person should be eligible for VA assistance, while a person being thrown out of boot camp or continuously in trouble during their service is not going to be eligible for VA assistance.

Many of the impersonators, in the current study, who committed private fraud did so by defrauding private citizens and asking for assistance in veterans groups. One person

told 'his' story on American Idol, a television talent-search show, which may have assisted his progress to the next round. He did not win the contest. Another way people benefited from 'their' military service was by creating a charity for veterans. The 'veterans' pocketed the money donated, rather than using it for its intended purpose. Ten people (14.71%) in the current sample started charities for their own financial gain. Not only is the veteran status abused for charitable donations, at times people abuse 'their' veteran status to start and promote a business. As veterans are often held in high esteem and within the veteran community veteran businesses are often promoted, using veteran status can assist a business in becoming established. One impersonator started a moving business and advertised the business as being a veteran owned business. Some online reviews concerning this business stated that people chose it to help a veteran business, but the service was horrible. Not only was the business not veteran-owned, it also did not have a license to operate.

Pathological lying. When people fabricate their military history, it is rarely the only fabrication in their lives. For almost half of the individuals (N= 30, 44.12%) who had misrepresented their military service the GoV website contained similar untruths about other facets of their lives as well. Some of the fabrications included marriage to more than one woman, living in two locations and using the military as a way to explain absences in both locations, and other professions. One woman lied about military service and was caught by a veteran at an airport wearing a uniform (incorrectly) and she identified herself with a driver's license of a male with a picture which resembled her. When she was outed on the website she claimed to have been making a film for school (about a woman trying to gain access and fight in a combat position dressed as a male

since women were not allowed in those positions at the time) and she used her brother's driver's license. The brother and his wife contacted the site to let their anger known about the use of the brother's driver's license. The impersonator tried to explain the situation and tried to get her story off of the GoV website. The site investigators then found out that there was no brother, and that she was not enrolled at the school she claimed to be making the video assignment for. She had legally tried to change her name to a male name, and it is unclear if she is transgender which has been suggested as a possibility on the GoV website. They also found out that she was known for committing fraud in the past, and was arrested for fraud before her military impersonation.

This story is one of the most bizarre accounts of military deception on the site, and in other anecdotal literature (Burkett & Whitley, 1998), where the impersonator had a history of fraud, falsifying their military history, their education, and their family.

Another of the subjects also was deceptive about his family, but in this case concocted not only his own military history but that of his father as well (both had 'attained' high officer ranks), before he 'killed' off his father (who in reality had died years earlier). He then went on to fabricate responses to his father's death by famous generals stating that the father would have been proud of such a talented son who would soon be getting a promotion. Another subject conjured up a military friend who wrote a long letter to a woman he wanted to impress stating what an amazing person this guy was and how lucky she was to be with him. There was also a person who admitted to being a compulsive liar.

When contacted by the site for a response to their deceit, many people either did not respond or tried to save face while maintaining their narrative was the truth. The impersonators kept claiming their extremely unlikely accounts of service, such as being a

special forces operator on at least twenty mission all over the world while earning seven Purple Hearts for being blown up by an IED of which they are the only survivor, and have received several Bronze Star Medals, and several Silver Stars, all before the age of 22. It really does not matter to the impersonators that their versions of their military careers are exaggerated and clearly incorrect on many different levels, nonetheless they will often stick to their original story. One subject did not want to come clean concerning his military fabrications, because it would be “bad for business” (a gym) which was at least partly build on his falsifications. However, 26 (38.24%) people did admit that they misrepresented either their whole military service or part of it, for example misleading people about being a special forces operator while not admitting to deceptions about anything else. Furthermore, 16 people (23.53%) also apologized to the military community for their misrepresentations. Additionally, seven people (10.29%) want their story removed from the website. Most of the people asked politely, however, some of them threatened the people behind the website. In one case the impersonator was so outraged about the loss of business due to his lack of proclaimed military skills being outed that he sued the people who outed him. The case was eventually dismissed.

Excuses. Some people made up excuses to be able to justify their deceptions. One common excuse for not being able to locate their military files is that the files are secret or classified and therefore of course the investigators could not locate their service record. Four people (5.88%) in the current sample used this excuse. In reality, no service files are classified. Some missions may be classified, but the service record information concerning enlistment dates, and which schools they have graduated are not classified.

Veteran organizations. One method used by impersonators for manipulating the public is by joining veterans organizations. There are different kinds of veterans organizations, such as the Congressional Medal of Honor Society for Medal of Honor recipients, the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) for Purple Heart recipients, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) for people who have fought in a foreign combat zone for the U.S., and the American Legion for people who have served during specified conflict eras. Impersonators joining veteran organizations in hopes of substantiating their military claims and is used as proof of their service as eligibility is extremely limited for these organizations. Some people join more than one organization. In the current study, the VFW was the most popular organization to (try to) join among impersonators (N=4, 5.88%). The American Legion was the second most common organization (N=3, 4.41%), while the other organizations only had one member (1.47%) each (Distinguished Flying Cross Society, Patriot Guard Rider, MOPH, Warrior Brotherhood Veterans Motorcycle Club).

Elected office. Two people (2.94%) tried to run for elected office based on their veteran status. One person first tried to run for the mayor of Shreveport, LA and afterwards he ran for the Governor of Louisiana as an independent. Another person ran for House of Representatives for the state of Mississippi. He lost his race. In the anecdotal literature (Burkett & Whitley, 1998) there are more stories of people embellishing or completely faking their military service to increase their chances of being elected. Since there may not be an exchange of money when it comes to elections, proving a fraud case may be difficult. In some states the lack of clear financial benefit caused complications which were addressed in statutes by including a tangible benefit

(which winning an election can be considered) as a form for criminal activity. Several states have specifically mentioned military fabrications in the race for public office in their military impersonation laws (see for example, Kentucky, Texas, and Wisconsin).

CHAPTER VI

Discussion

Professional impersonation is fairly common across society. There are countless arenas in which people falsify their history, such as educational background, and law enforcement employment (Rennison & Dodge, 2012), another one is military service. There is a paucity of knowledge when it concerns stolen valor, or military impersonation. Most of the available data that is anecdotal, or legal in nature. The current study is an attempt to gain more scholarly non-legal knowledge by studying a sample of military impersonators who were outed online. Being outed can have a great impact on the impersonators, as well as on their loved ones, and the military community. Furthermore, legal actions taken against the embellishers and impersonators greatly impact everybody in society. The ability to affect so many people makes this a valuable and essential topic for study. The current study found some interesting information and has some gripping implications and recommendations.

Summary of findings

Most of the impersonators were Non-Hispanic White males. Generally, they worked alone. However, one couple was found to operate a scheme to defraud the VA and social security. Most of the impersonators are known on several websites, not only the research website. In some cases, these websites contained interviews with ‘veterans’ which allowed them to be outed later, often due to telling absurd and unbelievable stories. Also posted online were the military files or the FOIA request result letters for many of the impersonators. In a few instances, official criminal justice system data (e.g., booking record, court record, or corrections record) was also included online.

Many impersonators cultivate a criminal history aside from the military impersonation. The crimes committed are not limited to impersonation or other kinds of fraud, that makes these military impersonators criminal generalists. Some examples of the types of offenses the deceivers have been arrested for are violent crimes, sexual offenses, and traffic related crimes. Few people were detained for stolen valor and when convicted the penalties were often low, unless other criminal charges were included. Combine this with the knowledge that a criminal case often takes a long time to run its course through the justice system, and there does not seem to be much incentive for a change to more prosocial behavior.

Slightly over half the military impersonators had financial gain as a motive for their fraudulent actions. This indicates that financial gain was not the primary motive for almost half of the research subjects who committed stolen valor. Consider the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 in this context and it demonstrates that the Supreme Court protected a sizable group of people from having their First Amendment protections violated. Furthermore, it is concerning that, in the case of violent and sexual crimes, most of the impersonators who committed either of these offenses did not have a military service history.

There is great value in military service for veterans due to the many benefits afforded to them. One of the benefits of military service is that it can be an excuse to receive leniency for criminal (both violent and non-violent) behavior (California bill urges judges, 2014; Efrati, 2009; *Porter v. McCollum*, 2009; Schwartz, 2010), both in the court as well as with their victims. In the anecdotal literature several examples can be found of people who claim to have served and to have fought in combat where they

acquired post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Burkett & Whitley, 1998). Both PTSD and combat history were employed to gain sympathy from the court or from their victims (Douglas & Olshaker, 1995; Ressler & Schachtman, 1992). “It was the war that made me violent, without the war I would not have done anything like this” is one type of example of how impersonators have tried to explain their actions. Often, if not exposed, these impersonators manage to receive shorter sentences, and compassion from their victims, who are often their own relatives. This highlights the need for a quick substantiation of military service claims, for both organizations and private citizens.

Not every military impersonator has a service history. In the current study quite a few people do have a service history. When taking into account the length of service, it became clear that many of the people who embellish their service actually served a very short amount of time (from a few days to a few months), and often did not manage to graduate boot camp or they managed to get in trouble often. Several people also went AWOL (Away WithOut Leave) during their service. This may cause a reduction in rank/paygrade before being discharged from the military. Accordingly, a higher rate of embellishing is expected in this group as it makes sense for people who did not honorably conclude their service contract to have cause to want people to believe they did serve honorably. This notion is strengthened by the fact that several of the people in the current sample admitted to being embarrassed for having to discontinue their service after not producing the desired results in boot camp.

The branch with the largest amount of embellishers is the Army. This is not surprising as the Army is the largest of the five branches. However, in the current sample, not a single person who had embellished their service falsified Coast Guard service.

Regarding paygrade, almost all service embellishers had attained a low enlisted paygrade, ranging between E1 and E4. In the current sample, not a single of the impersonators had attained an officer paygrade.

People are most likely to fabricate service in the Army and instead of most people having been released at E1-E5 paygrades, most people fabricate higher enlisted paygrades and some even decided to be officers. The feigned length of service is also longer than the actual service length. Uniforms were a common occurrence, often worn in support of the military stories. Generally, when uniforms were worn the impersonator usually was a display of deceit as the uniform was worn incorrectly. Patches arranged inaccurately, uniforms belonging to different branches being combined as one, and awards being positioned improperly were just some of the examples found in the present sample. This highlighted, at least to service personnel of the specific branch, that the person was an impersonator rather than active duty personnel or a veteran.

Many people included unearned awards to their counterfeit uniforms. In the current sample, not a single person purported to have received the Medal of Honor, the highest military decoration attainable (Stern, Stern, & Mink, 2014). The second highest decoration for valor, the Crosses (Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, and the Distinguished Service Cross; Stern, Stern, & Mink, 2014), was used, although not commonly. The Silver Star, Bronze Star Medal, and the Bronze Star Medal for Valor were also co-opted by some of the impersonators. However, the favorite award used for impersonation purposes was the Purple Heart. Just like with the uniforms, some of the people made incorrect award claims while simultaneously being unaware of the award regulations concerning the bestowment of the award. This creates unbelievable stories, at

least to people who are aware of the regulations. It also increases the chances of apprehension. Many people did not serve the way they imagined (usually as a hero) which often motivated the impersonators to fabricate service in specific units. These units are frequently special forces units, like the Green Berets, or the Navy SEALs. The number of times a unit was claimed seemed to coincide with the quantity of media attention for the units involved. This could explain why certain units have more admirers who falsify their military resumes than other units.

Deployments and combat are often fabricated as well. Oftentimes stories are told of heroic acts the impersonator has committed during these deployments while in combat. This was evidenced by the impersonators' claims of having earned the CIB, CAB, and the CAR (all ribbons awarded to people who have experienced combat), and in some cases even claimed to have earned several of the combat ribbons (which is a rare occurrence). In some instances, people have inserted themselves into famous mass casualty events, such as the Beirut bombing in 1983. This again seems to relate back to a need for attention, even as there generally is a large amount of information concerning these events available. This information may facilitate the exposure of a military impersonator as opposed to impostors who insert themselves into stories that received less media attention.

When people fabricate combat service they may also fake combat injuries. Some of the most common psychological combat injuries mentioned by impostors were PTSD and TBI (traumatic brain injury). These also happen to be disorders which are difficult to confirm objectively. If combat personnel is dismembered during an IED (improvised explosive device) attack, it is fairly easy to confirm the injury and the need for assistance.

This is not the case with PTSD and TBI. A diagnosis depends on the patient's subjective feelings concerning their experiences. It should therefore not come as a surprise that these disorders are faked by people who have not served as well as people who have not served in a position where they could have experienced a traumatic event such as an IED attack. A traumatic event is a prerequisite for being diagnosed with PTSD (see Appendix J).

Financial fraud could be a motive here as the monetary incentive from the VA to have a disability is great. To receive the disability payments, one has to prove the disability. It is much easier to demonstrate the loss of a limb than PTSD. This means that the VA, as well as other organizations, should verify the disability-applicants' combat service and wounding before awarding any disability money or health care benefits. To receive disability payments from the VA (or assistance from other organizations) a DD214 is often used as evidence of service. Over a quarter of the subjects falsified this critically important document, while almost a third used a fake identification document to support service claims. Evidence of service is also necessary to receive veteran license plates and the financial benefits that are associated with the specialized plates. However, several people still managed to obtain these license plates without having served.

Establishing charities for veterans to divert the money to themselves occurred in several cases. As demonstrated, financial gain is an important motive for military impersonation. Over half of the cases included statements concerning financial fraud committed by the impersonator, and the many ways to benefit from these lies. However, in close to half of the sample there were no statements regarding financial gain. The Supreme Court protected these impersonators when they declared the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 a First Amendment violation. Even if military impersonation is not always

considered a crime, there is still a social stigma attached to misrepresenting one's military service when so many have laid down their lives during their service. Additionally, some people have tried to use their embellished or fake military service to attain elected office. Some states specifically penalize this behavior even though there likely was no direct financial benefit from the lies. However, gaining favor over others to acquire employment (which an elected office is) is still considered criminal behavior in these states.

Some people did not only fabricate a military history, they stole the identity of military personnel who were killed during their service, or who were deployed. In some instances, stories were 'stolen'. The impersonators would then insert themselves into the true story replacing the person whom actually experienced the event. An additional method for some of the impostors to bolster their military claims was by getting military related tattoos. If a person has not served, they are not expected to have a military related tattoo. However, that did not stop some of the impersonators from getting military unit tattoos. For people who had a service history a military tattoo by itself is not a sign of impersonation as it is expected that they may get military related tattoos during their service. Nonetheless, some of the people with a service history did get tattoos of units in which they did not serve, such as the Rangers.

Additionally, some impostors used the measure of gaining or attempting to gain access to veteran organizations to give credence to their military service claims. These veteran organizations have specific regulations for admittance, among which is confirming military service. Some subjects managed to deceive these organizations and join while they were not eligible for admittance according to the organization regulations.

The VFW (veterans of foreign wars) was the most popular organization among the impostors. To join the VFW a person has to have served in an overseas campaign (Veterans of Foreign Wars, n.d.).

In close to half of the impersonation stories there is evidence of the impostors deceiving people related to other factors than their military service. This shows that the deceitful behavior is widespread and a solution to prevent this behavior should have a broad base. Even though the impersonators misled many, some are willing to admit to their military service misrepresentations (or part there off) after having been exposed. Simultaneously other impersonators maintain their stories, frequently by stating that their records are classified or secret and that is why no records could be located. This is false as military service records are not classified. Certain missions may be classified, however, most other service information is publically available. This information includes enlistment year, the schools attended during their service, etc. Fewer than a quarter of the impostors have apologized for their misrepresentations. Even so, about one tenth of the impersonators asked or demanded their story be taken off the website. The people behind the website have been threatened with physical injuries and taken sued by some of the people they exposed. In conclusion, there are myriad issues which arise from military impersonation that warrant consideration when creating legislation and policy on the topic. The following are some of these recommendations.

Policy implications and recommendations

Military impersonation causes many complications in society, and for all the people involved. Military impostors also cause an increase of distrust in general society and toward veterans in particular. The findings from the current study lead to several

policy implications and recommendations to alleviate these predicaments. First though incentives need to be highlighted. Incentives are basically rewards for behavior; they are a motivation for people to perform a certain way (Levitt & Dubner, 2009, 2011).

Incentives are relevant in the current situation because certain incentives which are in place currently may need to be retired or reduced, while other incentives need to be created or increased.

Legislative policy recommendations. Living in a group is a necessity that people cannot get out of, it is part of human evolution (Brewer, 2007). This means that there are certain ways that an organizational scheme needs to be implemented in society. This applies any part of society as well as to the military, military impersonation, and related military and veteran benefits. In a multitude of societies this entails the creation of statutes. The principal statute in the U.S. is the Constitution which contains the First Amendment protection to freedom of speech. Fabricating a military history is protected under the First Amendment, provided that the impostor does not gain tangible benefits from the misrepresentations. The Supreme Court ruling concerning the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 affirmed the First Amendment protection for military fabrications (Schoen & Falchek, 2014; U.S. v. Alvarez, 2012; Valkenaar, 2013). Balancing the protection and prosecution of people who disrupt society is extremely challenging. The current federal Stolen Valor Act (of 2013) is an honorable attempt at maintaining this balance when it comes to military impersonation. There are other statutes which can support the prosecution of fraud and impersonation as well. This applies to both the federal and the state levels.

When taking account of the sentencing, the importance of incentives for changing behavior becomes relevant. The statutes need to consider how people respond to incentives in reality, not just how politicians predict the response (Levitt & Dubner, 2011). First the punishment for a crime needs to be nearer to the occurrence of the offense. Currently, there exists an extensive period between offense and punishment. On top of that, the offense may not have been a single instance, but may have occurred over an extended period. If people are eventually captured, sentences may only be light for stolen valor related crimes. To curtail this behavior, it may be necessary to more actively pursue these offenders so they are apprehended sooner.

Increased creativity in the types of punishment disseminated may be an incentive to decrease the fraudulent behavior. Incarceration may benefit certain crime types and certain people better than it will others. Since many veterans consider disrespect for the uniform one of the greatest issues when it comes to military impersonation, it may be reasonable to take into account different sentencing types. Restorative justice could be a viable option for certain stolen valor cases. Restorative justice entails a system which has a focus on offender rehabilitation. According to this system, reconciliation between the offender and their victim(s) and/or the general public is the appropriate action to resolve the difficulties between offender and victim. When there is a specific victim, such as is the case with identity theft, or when an offender “borrows” another person’s version of military service, or inserts themselves into a well-known event such as the Beirut Marine barracks bombing, restorative justice could be advantageous for both the offender and victim. However, when there is no specific victim restorative justice may not accomplish its goal and therefore would not be the obvious choice. Nevertheless, it could be useful

for the impersonators and society to sentence the offenders to perform community service for whichever branch they pretended to serve in. This approach, even though it lacks a specific victim, can lead to some manner of reconciliation and understanding concerning the offender actions. The aforementioned also benefits society as the military can have services performed for free, and simultaneously the tax payer does not have to pay for incarceration. Likewise, restitution of the financial profits from public and private organizations as well as from private citizens should also be emphasized as part of the sentencing.

Only legally penalizing the abuse of a few specific decorations may not be enough incentive for some people to stop impersonating military personnel. The possibility exists that it will only stop the offenders from using certain decorations, while taking advantage of other decorations of which the unregulated use is not yet punishable. This could lead to politicians trailing behind the facts and trying to adjust the military impersonation laws on a regular basis to include new decorations to the already existing statutes. To avoid the problem of continuously lagging behind the facts, a solution may be creating an all-encompassing statute penalizing the abuse of all decorations. A review of the current federal and state statutes concerning stolen valor and if the statute distinguishes between certain decorations may be warranted, and it may be necessary to include the formerly excluded decorations.

Another option to prevent more military impersonation is to decrease the ease by which one can obtain military equipment. One way would be to make sure that all military decorations, such as awards, medals, and ribbons, are property of the United States government. This could be similar to the regulations concerning the U.S. passport.

Title 22 §51.9 shows that a passport is property of the government at all times. Title 18 U.S. Code §1543 concerns forgery or false use of a passport and the punishment a person can receive for forging or misusing a U.S. passport. If military decorations are property of the government, people who create and sell them without prior permission from the government can be prosecuted, and so can people who falsely wear or state they earned one. Title 18 U.S. Code §1543 also makes the willful and knowing use of a forged passport or of a passport that was not meant for the holder, illegal. This could reduce the amount of military decorations in circulation. If fewer decorations are widely available, it would be harder for people to buy and use them to ‘verify’ their military history. This should reduce the amount of people committing stolen valor. In the current study only one person was found to potentially have serious mental disorders. For these few people it should be possible to create an exemption for punishment and order them to receive mental health care instead of incarceration or alternative punishment due to their lack of willful and knowing use of these awards, medals, and ribbons.

Database recommendations. The need to monitor who receives a military award has been noted early on by George Washington (Sterner, Sterner, & Mink, 2014; The Purple Heart, n.d.). More comprehensive databases where public, and private organizations as well as private citizens can check veteran status could potentially serve as a deterrent for stolen valor. Currently there are only very few databases available, such as the Congressional Medal of Honor database. A new comprehensive database for a wider range of decorations (ideally all decorations) should be created to facilitate the military verification process for both the public and private sectors. Databases do not have to contain all the private information, as that could lead to a privacy concern for

veterans and an increase in identity theft. However, a military database with a minimum amount of information necessary for verification purposes can be of great assistance in avoiding many stolen valor cases. For example, including, name, military branch, dates of enlistment and separation from the military, the paygrade (E-0/9, O-0/9, etc.), combat or non-combat related service, and discharge status can assist people distinguish between impersonators and genuine veterans. This may make it easier for people to discover the truth faster and may also return trust into the relationship between veterans and the general public, a relationship tarnished by the stolen valor offenders.

Additionally, it may be necessary to have an improved system for substantiating military service rather than simply using the DD214 provided by a veteran. The DD214 is very susceptible to being forged. Even though the medical records of veterans should be sent to the VA so they are available for when a veteran applies for benefits or medical assistance, this does not always occur. Therefore, the database that the VA should have is not complete which can cause many complications for veterans and leaves the door open for people with nefarious motives to take advantage of the system. One solution may be a bank type card with RFID chip (or the most excellent security available at the time) with all, or part of, the military service information (DD-214) on it. Veterans can show this card to quickly proof their military claims. This may work for the VA, but can also work for private organizations who want to discount their products for veterans.

App recommendation. Related to the previous database section is the option to decrease the lack of knowledge when it comes to the military. With all the different branches, with all the different regulations, and decorations, etc. it is necessary to educate the general public to take away the information advantage from the military

impersonators. This lack of knowledge concerns every part of the military such as the uniforms, patches, badges, awards, when certain decoration can be worn and when they cannot, etc. A database with all this information could be helpful in clarifying if someone is authorized to wear certain military decorations or not. One way to make this database easily accessible to the general public would be with a cell phone app.

An app could assist people when they end up in a situation where somebody may be lying about their service. Cell phones are widely available in the United States and many of them are smart phones which have the ability to access the internet³² (File, 2013). There are apps available where people can scan something and then information about what they scanned comes up. This could work with military information as well. By being able to scan the decorations people are wearing, by taking a picture of it, which allows the app to then automatically pull up the decoration and the authorization rules and history for the decoration. This would allow more people to identify military impostors and may help prevent people from impersonating the armed forces due to a greater chance of being apprehended, simply by spreading this military knowledge.

The need for more information becomes all the clearer when many of the stolen valor stories are considered. Many people wore a uniform to substantiate their service, however, most of the people wore the uniform incorrectly. For example, wearing patches in the wrong location, wearing (unearned) medals out of the authorized order, or wearing parts of the uniforms of different branches. As most people will have a hard time recognizing all the military decorations, let alone be able to know all the authorization

³² In 2011, almost half of the Americans used a cell phone to browse the internet according to the Census bureau.

regulations, a cell phone app would be able to assist people in recognizing whether a person is a true veteran or an impersonator.

Psychological recommendations. Financial fraud and attention seem to be the main motivations for many of the military impersonators. Although it is not easy to discontinue all fraud in society, the lack of attention may be easier to deal with. It seems that in society less and less attention is paid to people. New technologies which allow for less face-to-face communication (which also allows for more communication misunderstandings), both parents working, large amount of single parent households, etc. all allow for less attention being directed to people. This lack of attention may be part of the reason why so many people feel like they have to fabricate an honorable military service history (or education, or anything else which is considered honorable in society) only to receive attention and respect. Teaching people how to be parents and how to attach to their child in a healthy way, having wages so that families can survive on one salary as opposed to needing two, being able to hire good child care if both parents are employed, teaching people to respect each other, possibly in school, may lead to increased feelings of importance and respect. It may also teach people how to earn respect and attention in a healthy lawful manner. These suggestions are easier said than done, but it is necessary to take the psychological aspect into account and not only the legal and information aspects.

An additional complication on the psychological plain is the problem of psychological fraud for financial benefits. Many people claim to have combat related injuries such as PTSD and TBI. If someone wants to defraud the VA, claiming to have serious physical injuries is not the most intelligent way to go as it should be fairly easy to

verify if someone lost a limb during combat or not. One it would be visible on their bodies and two it should be part of their military record (e.g., hospital stay, and Purple Heart). None of this applies to mental disorders. Often mental disorders are subjective and the person claiming to have the disorder is the only one capable of stating whether they have serious problems or not. There is no objective evidence that can be attained to verify the mental disorders. Many people in the current sample claimed to have PTSD and TBI as combat related injuries, similar to what is found in some of the anecdotal literature (see Douglas & Olshaker, 1995; Ressler & Schachtman, 1992). Most of them however, had not served at all or has not served in combat positions.

One factor that is necessary to claim PTSD is a traumatic life-or-death event. If these impersonators did not see combat, they did not acquire PTSD in the military and should therefore not receive financial benefits for this disability. However, there are people who genuinely suffer from PTSD and TBI and they do not need impostors to increase the predicament these patients are in by making people distrustful of their disorder. Therefore, a better approach is needed to distinguish between people who genuinely suffer from PTSD and need treatment and possibly benefits after a combat deployment and people who do not have PTSD but only are trying to obtain financial benefits. More research into mental disorders, such as malingering, and PTSD, as well as a better approach of researching and verifying a person's military history before awarding benefits are necessary to contain financial fraud while being able to award health care and benefits faster to veterans who really suffer from these problems.

Military recommendations. As the current study demonstrated, there are many people who have served and committed stolen valor. Therefore, it may be necessary for

the military to add a flyer to their separation packet. The flyer should contain information regarding stolen valor, which behaviors are considered stolen valor, what the statutes are, and what the punishment is for committing it. This information may be especially relevant to people who are released with the paygrades of E1-E5 as these paygrades contained the greatest amount of people embellishing their military service, at least in the current study. Also, people who may not finish boot camp, for whatever reason, or leave the military shortly after joining should be informed concerning stolen valor. By informing people early some potential impostors may be convinced not to commit military impersonation, saving many people a lot of hardship.

Limitations

The current study contributes considerably by researching a topic that has mainly been researched in the legal field. However, the study has some limitations. Firstly, the data used is publically available from the internet, making it easily accessible and a convenience sample. However, the cases are not randomly assigned and therefore the findings are not generalizable to the larger stolen valor offender population. Secondly, the author was the only one who coded information for the database which can increase subjectivity. For many variables that was not a problem as the data was clear, however, at times another researcher may come to a different conclusion for some of the variables. Also, there was not a lot of data concerning the reasons why people impersonated military personnel as the impostors' opinions were generally not stated online. In many cases that was because the person would not respond to the website request for an explanation. This means that the motivations are at times assumed from the behaviors rather than being able to include the offender statements. However, bear in mind that

many of these people were compulsive liars and their statement may or may not have provided more insight into the impersonation motivations.

Future research

The current study lays the foundation for future research, as this is one of the first social scientific studies into the topic of military impersonation. The scarcity of data has left much unstudied. Future research can go many directions. One is a focus on official law enforcement and/or prosecutorial data. Official and more complete data would give a better overview of the criminal history of many of the impersonators than can be gained from online data. The current study showed that many of the impersonators have committed other crimes as well, crimes which make them criminal generalists. This may make them a danger to their victims beyond the financial burden that is most often considered the main consequence of their impersonation.

At the same time, official military search data, such as the military record when one has served or the FOIA request response if one has not, can be helpful in comparing the real service to the fictitious service on more variables than what was available in the online data. It may also be enlightening to get information about stolen valor through a survey. Offender surveys could allow for insight into the motivation for the impersonation. Surveys of the general population can result in data concerning the importance of the topic. Additionally, future research should focus on mental disorders which can be easily faked, such as malingering, and PTSD (Sparr & Pankratz, 1983), which could assist in decreasing the amount of people fabricating these disorders. Fewer fakers means more mental healthcare availability for people who really suffer from the disorders and need the medical care. It also means fewer financial disability payments

and more money available for veteran care for the people who have actually earned the right to the benefits and medical care.

Furthermore, courts take military service into account in the punishment phase and it is often a mitigating circumstance, allowing the judge to reduce the sentence for the veteran (California bill urges judges, 2014; Efrati, 2009; Schwartz, 2010). However, there needs to be some manner for the court to verify the veteran status. If the verification process is performed through the offender, like offering a DD214 to the court, a study may be warranted to research who was an actual service member and who is an impersonator as the DD214 is easily forged. A study like this should also take into account the combat service (or the lack thereof) which was performed and any PTSD claims. People who have not been in combat are highly unlikely to suffer from service related PTSD. Therefore, even if the offender has actually served, more insight needs to be gained concerning what the person did during their service. Taking the PTSD symptoms into account in combination with the crime type is of great importance as well. PTSD is not known to cause a person to become a criminal, even if some of the behaviors may lead a person to, for example, self-medicate and get addicted to (il)legal substances and perform related crimes. Consequently, it is necessary to perform more research into the connection between PTSD and crime.

Likewise, there seems to be some confusion as to whether the leniency should apply to all veterans or only the ones who were wounded during their service. While some complain that it is against the equality principle to use military service as a mitigating circumstance. Creating this special status for veterans requires more research to avoid complications with the equality principle. Therefore, there can be some benefit

to studying the people who receive leniency from the courts and how the courts handle veterans.

Lastly, since the military impersonation problem is not limited to the United States, it may be necessary to perform comparative studies (for a selection of international laws concerning stolen valor see appendix I). A comparison between the U.S. statutes and other countries could give an overview on the topic and the way different countries choose to alleviate the problem and lower the incentives for military impersonation. A comparison for the motivations for military impersonation could also shed light on American impersonation. It would be especially interesting to compare the U.S. to a country which has a draft and, therefore, has a high enlistment rate. If most people in a country enlist, does it still benefit the impersonator to fabricate the military history? Does the draft lower the inclination to impersonate military personnel, or is there no difference between countries with a draft and a volunteer military? There are many questions that are currently unanswered that could explain the previously mentioned differences through a comparative study.

Conclusion

There is a paucity of data on the topic of military impersonation. The current study was an attempt to gain more insight and academic knowledge on stolen valor as it creates a great many problems for veterans and society (Burkett & Whitley, 1998; Sterner, Sterner & Mink, 2014). Even though military impersonation is often considered a victimless crime (Burkett & Whitley, 1998), the current study showed that there may be more victims to these offenders than generally anticipated. This becomes relevant when creating new statutes punishing the impersonation behaviors. There are also many people

who have a criminal record for many different crime types. In some cases, these impersonators have not served, yet try to receive sympathy from the court for their 'heroic service', taking advantage of the status of veterans in U.S. society. This status is degraded by the impersonations and may cause distrust of real veterans' status. It is necessary to take human nature into account and decrease the incentives for committing stolen valor, while increasing the incentives for more honest behavior. To accomplish this, more research needs to be performed on the topic of stolen valor, as well as evaluations of the current statutes and punishments.

REFERENCES

- Ambrose, H. (2011). *The Pacific: Hell was an ocean away*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.
- Ambrose, S.E. (1992). *Band of brothers*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed. Text Revision). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association.
- An Act to amend title 18, United States Code, with respect to fraudulent representations about having received military decorations or medals, H.R. 258, 113th Cong. (2013). Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/258>
- “An Act to provide for the award of medals of honor, distinguished service medals, and Navy Crosses, and for other purposes” (PL 253, February 14, 1919). United States Statutes at Large, 40, 14, 1919.
- Anderson, E. (1999). *Code of the street: Decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Appleby, S.C., Hasel, L.E., & Kassin, S.M. (2013). Police-induced confessions: An empirical analysis of their content and impact. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 19(2), 111-128.

- Appleby, S.C., & Kassin, S.M. (2016). When self-report trumps science: Effects of confessions, DNA, and prosecutorial theories on perceptions of guilt. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 22(2), 127-140.
- Ariely, D., Bracha, A., & Meier, S. (2009). Doing good or doing well? Image motivation and monetary incentives in behaving prosocially. *American Economic Review*, 99(1), 544-555.
- Ariely, D., Gneezy, U., Loewenstein, G., & Mazar, N. (2009). Large stakes and big mistakes. *Review of Economic Studies*, 76, 451-469.
- Artz, M. (2015, June 4). 'Frogman' admits his claim of World War II heroism was bogus. *Stars and Stripes*. Retrieved from <http://www.stripes.com/news/us/frogman-admits-his-claim-of-world-war-ii-heroism-was-bogus-1.350520>
- ashmccall (2014, February 4). Bronze Star Medal – “Heroic or meritorious achievement or service” [Web log Post]. Retrieved from <http://armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2014/02/bronze-star-medal-heroic-or-meritorious-achievement-or-service/>
- Awards and decorations statistics by conflict (2016, January 8). The Adjutant General Directorate, United States Army Human Resources Command. Retrieved from <https://www.hrc.army.mil/TAGD/Awards%20and%20Decorations%20Statistics%20by%20Conflict>
- Ayers, W. (2006, April). Hearts and minds: Military recruitment and the high school battlefield. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 594-599.
- Babbie, E. (2002). *The practice of social research* (9th ed.). USA: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

- Bachman, J.G., Segal, D.R., Freedman-Doan, P., & O'Malley, P.M. (2000). Who chooses military service? Correlates of propensity and enlistment in the U.S. Armed Forces. *Military Psychology, 12*(1), 1-30.
- Baker, T.E. (2012). Can Congress make it a crime to lie about military medals or is the First Amendment a “get out of jail free speech card”? *Preview of United States Supreme Court cases, 39*(5), 182-186.
- Barber, M., & Smith, S. (2015, August 16). Nicholasville man accused of posing as wounded Marine to get service dog. WKYT, Retrieved from <http://www.wkyt.com/home/headlines/Nicholasville-man-accused-of-posing-as-wounded-marine-to--321996671.html>
- Becker, S.W., & Eagly, A.H. (2004). The heroism of women and men. *American Psychologist, 59*(3), 163-178.
- Berg, P., Aubrey, S., Emmett, R., Herrick, N., Spikings, B., Goldsman, A., Wahlberg, M., Levinson, S., Grigoriants, V. (Producers), & Berg, P. (Director). (2013). *Lone Survivor* [Motion Picture]. United States of America: Universal Pictures.
- Biziou-van-Pol, L., Haenen, J., Novaro, A., Occhipinti Liberman, A., & Capraro, V. (2015). Does telling white lies signal pro-social preferences? *Judgment and Decision Making, 10*(6), 538-548.
- Bohns, V.K., Roghanizad, M.M., & Xu, A.Z. (2014). Underestimating our influence over others' unethical behavior and decisions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 40*(3), 348-362.
- Bond, C.F., Jr., & DePaulo, B.M. (2006). Accuracy of deception judgements. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 10*(3), 214-234.

- Bond, C.F., Jr., & Uysal, A. (2007). On lie detection “wizards”. *Law and Human Behavior, 31*(1), 109-115.
- Bouffard, L.A. (2003). Examining the relationship between military service and criminal behavior during the Vietnam era: A research note. *Criminology, 41*(2), 491-510.
- Bouffard, L.A. (2005). The military as a bridging environment in criminal careers: Differential outcomes of the military experience. *Armed Forces Society, 31*(2), 273-295.
- Bowling, U.B., & Sherman, M.D. (2008). Welcoming them home: Supporting service members and their families in navigating the tasks of reintegration. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 39*(4), 451-458.
- Brewer, M.B. (2007). The importance of being *we*: Human nature and intergroup relations. *American Psychologist, 62*(8), 728-738.
- Buffett, P. (2013, July 26). The charitable-industrial complex. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/27/opinion/the-charitable-industrial-complex.html?_r=2
- Burkett, B.G., & Whitley, G. (1998). *Stolen valor: How the Vietnam generation was robbed of its heroes and its history*. Dallas, TX: Verity Press, Inc.
- Burrelli, D.F. (2012). *The Purple Heart: Background and issues for congress* (CRS Report No R42704). Retrieved from Congressional Research Service. <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42704.pdf>
- Burrelli, D.F., & Salazar Torreon, B. (2014). *Medal of Honor: History and issues* (CRS Report No 95-915). Retrieved from Congressional Research Service.
- California bill urges judges to consider PTSD in sentencing of military veterans. (2014,

- April 7). Retrieved from <http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2014/04/07/state-bill-urges-judges-to-consider-ptsd-in-sentencing-of-military-veterans/>
- Call, V.R.A., & Teachman, J.D. (1991). Military service and stability in the family life course. *Military Psychology*, 3(4), 233-250.
- Calvert, C. & Rich, R. (2010). Low-value expression, offensive speech, and the qualified First Amendment right to lie: From crush videos to fabrications about military medals. *University of Toledo Law Review*, 42, 1-36.
- Cappelen, A.W., Sorenson, E.O., & Tungodden, B. (2013). When do we lie? *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 93, 258-265.
- Carver, C.S., & Scheier, M.F. (2000). *Perspectives on personality* (4th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Charmaz, K. (2004). Grounded theory. In S. Nagy Hesse-Biber, & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research* (pp.496-521). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Chollet, E. (2014, January 01). JFQ72: "Gallantry and intrepidity": Valor decorations in current and past conflicts. Retrieved from <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/NewsArticleView/tabid/7849/Article/577469/gallantry-and-intrepidity-valor-decorations-in-current-and-past-conflicts.aspx>
- Collier, P. (2003). *Medal of Honor: Portraits of valor beyond the call of duty* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Artisan.
- Davis, C. (2015, July 12). Experts: Document Jacksonville veteran showed to prove he earned medals is fraudulent. *Stars and Stripes*. Retrieved from

<http://www.stripes.com/news/veterans/experts-document-jacksonville-veteran-showed-to-prove-he-earned-medals-is-fraudulent-1.357663>

Davis, S. (2008). *Corwin and Peltason's understanding the constitution* (17th ed.).

Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Dalton, T. (2013, August 31). How military imposters fool Anzac Day crowds, and themselves. *The Australian*. Retrieved on February 3, 2016 from

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/life/weekend-australian-magazine/tin-soldiers/story-e6frg8h6-1226706643141>

Daniel, L. (2011, September 8). Recruiters recall patriotism of post-9/11 America. *U.S.*

Department of Defense. Retrieved from <http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=65272>

Del Carmen, R.V. (2004). *Criminal procedure: Law and practice* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA Wadsworth.

Delmore, E. (2013, December 18). Fake CIA agent sentenced to 32 months. *MSNBC*.

Retrieved on February 10, 2016 from <http://www.msnbc.com/andrea-mitchell/cia-imposter-faces-prison-time>

Demakis, G.J., & Elhai, J.D. (2011). Neuropsychological and psychological aspects of malingered posttraumatic stress disorder. *Psychological Injury and Law*, 4, 24-31.

Demir, M., Simsek, O.F., & Procsal, A.D. (2013). I am so happy 'cause my best friend makes me feel unique: Friendship, personal sense of uniqueness and happiness.

Journal of Happiness Studies, 14, 1201-1224.

Douglas, J., & Olshaker, M. (1995). *Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's elite serial crime unit*.

New York, NY: Pocket Books.

Douglas, J. & Olshaker, M. (1999). *The anatomy of motive*. New York, NY: Pocket Books.

Dutch law Artikel 435a Wetboek van Strafrecht (n.d.)

Eastwood, C., Lorenz, R., Lazar, A., Cooper, B., Morgan, P. (Producers), & Eastwood, C. (Director). (2014). *American sniper* [Motion Picture]. United States of America: Warner Bros. Pictures.

Efrati, A. (2009, December 31). Judges consider new factor at sentencing: Military service. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB126221697769110969>

Einstein, A. (1954). *Ideas and opinions*. New York, NY: Wing Books.

Emerson, J., Pankratz, L., Joos, S., & Smith, S. (1994). Personality disorders in problematic medical patients. *Psychosomatics*, 35(5), 469-473.

Erb, H., & Gebert, S. (2014). Uniquely you. *Scientific American Mind*, 25(2), 26.

Executive Order 9260, 7 F.R. 8819 (1942).

Executive Order 9419, 9 F.R. 1495 (1944).

Executive Order 10600, 20 F.R. 1569 (1955).

Executive Order 11046, 27 F.R. 8575 (1962).

Executive Order 11904, 41 F.R. 5625 (1976).

False statements relating to health care matters, 18 U.S.C. §1035 (1996).

Feinstein, Y. (2015). The thin line between “crazy” and “hero”: Exploring the multiple statuses of US veterans in a work-therapy program. *Armed Forces & Society*, 41(1), 3-22.

- File, T. (2013, May). Computer and internet use in the United States. U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p20-569.pdf>
- Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Forgery or false use of passports, 18 U.S.C. §1543 (2012).
- Fraud. (2009). Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=325>
- Fraud and related activity in connection with identification documents, authentication features, and information, 18 U.S.C. §1028, (2006).
- Frauds against the United States, 10 U.S.C. 932 (1956).
- Free, M.D. Jr., & Ruesink, M. (2016). *Wrongful convictions of women: When innocence isn't enough*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
- Frueh, C., Elhai, J.D., Gold, P.B., Monnier, J., Magruder, K.M., Keane, T.M., & Arana, G.W. (2003). Disability compensation seeking among veterans evaluated for posttraumatic stress disorder. *Psychiatric Services*, 54(1), 84-91.
- Frueh, B.C., Elhai, J.D., Grubaugh, A.L., Monnier, J., Kashdan, T.B., Sauvageot, J.A., Hamner, M.B., Burkett, B.G., & Arana, G.W. (2005). Documented combat exposure of US veterans seeking treatment for combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 186, 467-472.
- Gade, P.A., Lakhani, H., & Kimmel, M. (1991). Military service: A good place to start? *Military Psychology*, 3(4), 251-267.
- Gal, S.L. (2011). Resolving the conflict between the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 and the First Amendment. *Brooklyn Law Review*, 77(1), 223-262.

- Gilligan, J. (2003). Shame, guilt, and violence. *Social Research*, 70(4), 1149-1180.
- Gino, F., Ayal, S., & Ariely, D. (2009). Contagion and differentiation in unethical behavior: The effect of one bad apple on the barrel. *Psychological Science: Research, theory, & application in psychology and related sciences*, 20(3), 393-398.
- Gino, F., Ayal, S., & Ariely, D. (2013). Self-serving altruism? The lure of unethical actions that benefit others. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 93, 285-292.
- Gino, F., Norton, M.I., & Ariely, D. (2010). The counterfeit self: The deceptive costs of faking it. *Psychological Science*, 21(5), 712-720.
- Gino, F., & Pierce, L. (2009). The abundance effect: Unethical behavior in the presence of wealth. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 109, 142-155.
- Gino, F., Schweitzer, M.E., Mead, N.L., & Ariely, D. (2011). Unable to resist temptation: How self-control depletion promotes unethical behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 115, 191-203.
- Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (2008). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction.
- Gleitman, H., Fridlund, A.J., & Reisberg, D. (1999). *Psychology* (5th ed.). New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Graebner, W. (2013). "The man in the water": The politics of the American hero, 1970-1985. *The Historian*, 517-543.

- Halevy, R., Shalvi, S. & Verschuere, B. (2014). Being honest about dishonesty: Correlating self-reports and actual lying. *Human Communication Research*, 40, 54-72.
- Hare, R.D. (1993). *Without conscience: The disturbing world of the psychopaths among us*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Hare, R.D., & Neumann, C.S. (2006). The PCL-R assessment of psychopathy: Development, structural properties, and new directions. In C.J. Patrick (Ed.), *Handbook of Psychopathy* (pp. 58-88). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Harper, J. (2014, July 2). Ex-Marine's 'bogus as hell' record used in trial. Retrieved from <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2014/07/02/former-marines-bogus-as-hell-service-record-used-in-trial.html>
- Holzer, H.M. & Holzer, E. (2012). *Fake warriors: Identifying, exposing, and punishing those who falsify their military service* (2nd ed.). Highlands Ranch, CO: Madison Press.
- Home Box Office [HBO]. (2001). *Band of Brothers* [DVD].
- Home Box Office [HBO]. (2010). *The Pacific* [DVD].
- Huan, X., Dong, P., & Mukhopadhyay, A. (2014). Proud to belong or proudly different? Lay theories determine contrasting effects of incidental pride on uniqueness seeking. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41, 697-712.
- Inskip, S. (2009, August 25). Cia impersonator receives speeding ticket. *National Public Radio*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112196699>

- Jowers, K. (2016, May 6). Troops buy bigger, costlier homes at younger ages, survey says. *Military Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/life/2016/05/06/troops-buy-bigger-costlier-homes-younger-ages-survey-says/84021096/>
- Jupp, V. (1989). *Methods of criminological research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kasal, B., & Helms, N.R. (2007). *My men are my heroes: The Brad Kasal story*. Des Moines, IA: Meredith Books.
- Kassin, S.M. (2008). False confessions: Causes, consequences, and implications for reform. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17(4), 249-253.
- Kassin, S.M. (2005). On the psychology of confessions: Does innocence put innocents at risk? *American Psychologist*, 60(3), 215-228.
- Kelsie Hoover, uses fake persona “Michael Cipriani” at Baltimore Washington airport for stolen valor. *The Guardian of Valor*. Retrieved from <http://guardianofvalor.com/michael-cipriani-busted-at-baltimore-washington-airport-for-stolen-valor/>
- Kelty, R., Kleykamp, M., & Segal, D.R. (2010). The military and the transition to adulthood. *Future of Children*, 20(1), 181-207.
- Kime, P. (2016, February 15). Calls to veterans suicide hotline went to voicemail, report says. *Military Times*. Retrieved on February 15, 2016 from <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/veterans/2016/02/15/calls-veterans-suicide-hotline-went-voice-mail-report-says/80409966/>
- Kinsella, E.L., Ritchie, T.D., & Igou, E.R. (2015). Lay perspectives on the social and psychological functions of heroes. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 1-12.

- Krause, K., & Tarrant, D. (2013, February 19). Former Marine lied about combat injury to defraud charities. *The Dallas Morning News*. Retrieved from <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/community-news/mckinney/headlines/20130219-former-marine-lied-about-combat-injury-to-defraud-charities.ece>
- Kraut, R., Olson, J., Banaji, M., Bruckman, A., Cohen, J., & Couper, M. (2004). Report of board of scientific affairs' advisory group on the conduct of research on the internet. *American Psychologist*, 59(2), 105-117.
- Kyle, C., DeFelice, J., & McEwen, S. (2012). *American sniper: The autobiography of the most lethal sniper in U.S. military history*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Landphair, T. (2011, June 30). Fraud hunters unmask military imposters. *Voice of America*. Retrieved on February 11, 2016 from <http://www.voanews.com/content/fraud-hunters-unmask-military-imposters—124852969/162740.html>
- Langer, R. (2011). Combat trauma, memory, and the World War II veteran. *War, Literature & the Arts: An International Journal of the Humanities*. Retrieved from <http://www.goldenarrowresearch.com/resources/Combat%20Trauma,%20Memory%20and%20the%20WWII%20Veteran.pdf>
- Lanier, M.M., & Henry, S. (1998). *Essential criminology*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Leo, R.A., & Osfhe, R.J. (1998). The consequences of false confessions: Deprivations of liberty and miscarriages of justice in the age of psychological interrogation. *The Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 88(2), 429-496.

- Levitt, S.D., & Dubner, S.J. (2009). *Freakonomics: A rogue economist explores the hidden side of everything*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.
- Levitt, S.D., & Dubner, S.J. (2011). *Super freakonomics: Global cooling, patriotic prostitutes and why suicide bombers should buy life insurance*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.
- Lewin, T. (2007, April 27). Dean at M.I.T. resigns, ending a 28-year lie. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/27/us/27mit.html?_r=0
- Library of Congress (n.d.). Veterans history project: About the project. Retrieved from <https://www.loc.gov/vets/about.html>
- Lichtman, M. (2014). *Qualitative research for the social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lloyd-Jones, B.F. (2012). The stolen valor conundrum: How to honor the military while protecting free speech. *Criminal and Civil Confinement*, 38, 153-175.
- Luttrell, M. & Robinson, P. (2007). *Lone survivor: The eyewitness account of operation Redwing and the lost heroes of SEAL team 10*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.
- Lynam, D.R., & Derefinko, K.J. (2006). Psychopathy and personality. In C.J. Patrick (Ed.), *Handbook of Psychopathy* (pp. 133-155). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Macalpine, I. (2014, February 5). Canadian military imposter turns in uniform after years of pretending to be officer. *Toronto Sun*. Retrieved on February 4, 2016 from <http://www.torontosun.com/2014/02/05/141anadian-military-imposter-turns-in-uniform-after-years-of-pretending-to-be-officer#>

- MacLean, A., & Elder, G.H. Jr. (2007). Military service in the life course. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 33, 175-196.
- Major fraud against the United States, 18 U.S.C. §1031 (2009).
- Malingering, 10 U.S.C. 915 (1956).
- Mara, J. (2015, May 1). California military community leader 'has not served' in the Marines as claimed, authorities say. *Stars and Stripes*. Retrieved from <http://www.stripes.com/news/us/calif-military-community-leader-has-not-served-in-the-marines-as-claimed-authorities-say-1.343671>
- Martin, C.E. (2012). War stories: Mitigation for clients who are veterans. Retrieved from <http://www.voiceforthedefenseonline.com/story/war-stories-mitigation-clients-who-are-veterans>
- Maslan, M. (2006). Sketches from life: Biographical fraud and traumatic nationalism: Joseph Ellis's Vietnam testimony. *Biography*, 29(4), 605-614.
- McClancy, K. (2013). The iconography of violence: Television, Vietnam, and the soldier hero. *Film & History*, 43(2), 50-66.
- McGarrell, E.F., Freilich, J.D., & Chermak, S. (2007). Intelligence-led policing as a framework for responding to terrorism. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 23, 142-158.
- McGrath, J.M., & Frueh, B.C. (2002). Fraudulent claims of combat status in the VA? (Letter to the editor). *Psychiatric Services*, 53(3), 345.
- McNally, R.J. (2003). Progress and controversy in the study of posttraumatic stress disorder. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54, 229-252.

- Milgram, S. (2009). *Obedience to authority: The experiment that challenged human nature*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Thought. (Original work published 1974)
- Military medals or decorations, 18 U.S.C. §704, (2003).
- Military medals or decorations, 18 U.S.C. §704 (2006).
- Moskos, C.C., Jr. (1971). Introduction: Public opinion and the military establishment. In C.C. Moskos, Jr. (Ed.), *Public opinion and the military establishment, volume 1* (pp. ix-xvi). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mosqueda, P. (2014, April 1). Hero complex. *Texas Observer*. Retrieved from <https://www.texasobserver.org/hero-complex/>
- Mossman, D. (1994). At the VA, it pays to be sick. *The Public Interest*, (Winter), 35-47.
- Murdoch, M., Nelson, D.B., & Fortier, L. (2003). Time, gender, and regional trends in the application for service-related post-traumatic stress disorder disability benefits, 1980-1998. *Military Medicine*, 169(8), 662-670.
- Noyes, D. (2015, June 1). I-team: Phony lieutenant commander honored at Alameda's USS Hornet museum. *ABC 7 News*. Retrieved on February 4, 2016 from <http://abc7news.com/news/i-team-phony-lieutenant-commander-honored-at-alameda-museum/761240/>
- Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense (n.d.). 2014 Demographics profile of the military community. Retrieved from <http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2014-Demographics-Report.pdf>

- Office of the under secretary of defense (2009). Report concerning the feasibility of a publically searchable database for individual valor award recipients. Retrieved from <http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/national/DB-Report.pdf>
- Officer or employee of the United States, 18 U.S.C. §912 (2006).
- O’Sullivan, M., Frank, M.G., Hurley, C.M., & Tiwana, J. (2009). Police lie detection accuracy: The effect of lie scenario. *Law and Human Behavior*, 33, 530-538.
- Palazzolo, J. (2012, August 14). Is impersonating a police officer your First Amendment right? *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved on March 22, 2016 from <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2012/08/14/is-impersonating-a-police-officer-your-first-amendment-right/>
- Pankratz, L. (1990). Letters to the editor: Continued appearance of fictitious posttraumatic stress disorder. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 147(6), 811-812.
- Pankratz, L., & Jackson, J. (1995). Wandering patients in the veterans affairs system – Reply to authors of letters to the editor. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 332(23), 1583.
- Passanisi, A., Gervasi, A.M., Madonia, C., Guzzo, G., & Greco, D. (2015). Attachment, self-esteem and shame in emerging adulthood. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191, 342-346.
- Passport property of the U.S. government, 22 U.S.C. §51.9 (2002).
- Patton, M.Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Pennsylvania man admits he lied about being Auschwitz survivor. (2016, June 27). *Arutz Sheva*. Retrieved from <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/214132#.V3WaVvkrKUK>
- Perlin, M.L. (2015). "I expected it to happen/ I knew he'd lost control": The impact of PTSD on criminal sentencing after the promulgation of DSM-5. *Utah Law Review*, (4), 881-927.
- Porter v. McCollum, 130 S.Ct. 447 (2009).
- Possession of false papers to defraud United States, 18 U.S.C. §1002, (1994).
- Preventing Stolen Valor: Hearing before the Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense and Foreign Operations, House of Representatives*, 112th Cong. (2012).
- Reaves, B.A. (2011, July). Census of state and local law enforcement agencies, 2008. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cslla08.pdf>
- Reid, C., & Janisch, J. (2016, March 10). Wounded warrior project execs fired. Retrieved from <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/wounded-warrior-project-ceo-and-coo-fired/>
- Rennison, C.M., & Dodge, M. (2012). Police impersonation: Pretenses and predators. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37, 505-522.
- Reph, L. (Producer). (2014, March 26). *Brothers in War*. U.S.A.: National Geographic Channel.
- Ressler, R.K., & Schachtman, T. (1992). *Whoever fights monsters: My twenty years tracking serial killers for the FBI*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Rowland, A. (2015, July 5). Stolen valor can also be a problem among active-duty troops. *Stars and Stripes*. Retrieved on February 11, 2016 from

<http://www.stripes.com/news/stolen-valor-can-also-be-a-problem-among-active-duty-troops-1.356502>

Sampson, R.J., & Laub, J.H. (1996). Socioeconomic achievements in wasn't life course of disadvantaged men: Military service as a turning point, circa 1940-1965.

American Sociological Review, 61(3), 347-367.

Sanchez, T.R. (2000). It's time again for heroes – Or were they ever gone? *The Social Studies*, 91(2), 58-61.

Schacht v. United States, 398 U.S. 58, (1970).

Scheck, B., Neufeld, P., & Dwyer, J. (2003). *Actual innocence: When justice goes wrong and how to make it right*. New York, NY: New American Library.

Schoen, E.J., & Falchek, J.S. (2014). Stolen valor: Lies, deception and the First Amendment. *Southern Law Journal*, 24, 281- 290.

Schwartz, J. (2010, March 15). Defendants fresh from war find service counts in court.

The New York Times. Retrieved from

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/16/us/16soldiers.html>

Selective Service System [SSS] (2002). Background of selective service. Retrieved from

<http://www.sss.gov/backgr.htm>

Serio, K. (2015, October 13). Stolen valor: Shia LaBeouf lies to cops about military

service to avoid arrest. Retrieved from [http://www.breitbart.com/big-](http://www.breitbart.com/big-hollywood/2015/10/13/stolen-valor-shia-labeouf-lies-cops-military-service-avoid-arrest/)

[hollywood/2015/10/13/stolen-valor-shia-labeouf-lies-cops-military-service-avoid-arrest/](http://www.breitbart.com/big-hollywood/2015/10/13/stolen-valor-shia-labeouf-lies-cops-military-service-avoid-arrest/)

Shalvi, S., & De Dreu, C.K.W. (2014). Oxytocin promotes group-serving dishonesty.

PNAS, 111(15), 5503-5507.

- Shute, J. (2015, February 21). The Walter Mitty hunters exposing fake veterans. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved on February 3, 2016 from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/11425203/The-Walter-Mitty-Hunters-exposing-fake-veterans.html>
- Sledge, E.B. (2010). *With the old breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books. (Original work published 1981).
- Smith, J.E. (2012). *Eisenhower in war and peace*. New York, NY: Random House Publishing Group.
- Smith, K. (2012). Hey! That's my valor: The Stolen Valor Act and government regulation of false speech under the First Amendment. *Boston College Law Review*, 53, 775-806.
- Smith, R.B. (1971). Disaffection, delegitimation, and consequences: Aggregate trends for World War II, Korea and Vietnam. In C.C. Moskos, JR. (Ed.), *Public opinion and the military establishment, volume 1* (pp. 221-251). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Snyder, C.R., & Fromkin, H.L. (1977). Abnormality as a characteristic: The development and validation of a scale measuring need for uniqueness. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 86(5), 518-527.
- Sonnenfeld, J. (2015, February 2). The hero complex: A common, curable leadership malady. *Fortune.com* Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2015/02/02/hero-complex-leadership/>

- Southwick, S.M., Morgan, C.A,III, Nicolaou, A.L., & Charney, D.S. (1997). Consistency of memory for combat-related traumatic events in veterans of Operation Desert Storm. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 154(2), 173-177.
- Sparr, L. & Pankratz, L.D. (1983). Factitious posttraumatic stress disorder. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 140(1), 1016-1019.
- Special Benefit Allowances Rates: 2015 (2016). U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Retrieved on March 21, 2016 from http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/special_Benefit-Allowances_2015.asp
- Steele, J. (2010, January 14). Feds take aim at phony war heroes: Ramona man faces court hearing today. *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. Retrieved on February 25, 2016 from <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2010/jan/14/feds-take-aim-phony-war-heroes/>
- Sterner, D. (n.d.). Response to the: Report to the Senate and House Armed Services Committees on a searchable military valor decorations database. Copy in possession of author.
- Sterner, D., Sterner, P., & Mink, M. (2014). *Restoring valor: One couple's mission to expose fraudulent war heroes and protect America's military awards system*. New York, NY: Skyhorse Publishing.
- Sullivan, M.P., & Venter, A. (2005). The hero within: Inclusion of heroes into the self. *Self and Identity*, 4, 101-111.
- Taylor, A. (2015, October 20). Judge orders alleged fake CIA operative to remain in jail. *ABC News*. Retrieved on February 11, 2016 from

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/judge-orders-alleged-fake-cia-operative-wayne-simmons/story?id=34608819>

Tepper Tian, K., Bearden, W.O., & Hunter, G.L. (2001). Consumer's need for uniqueness: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28, 50-66.

Texas Educ. Code §54.341 (n.d.).

Texas Occ. Code Title 2 Chapter 55 (n.d.).

Texas Transp. Code 681.008 (n.d.).

The Badge of Military Merit/ The Purple Heart. (2010). *U.S. Army Center of Military History*. Retrieved from <http://www.history.army.mil/html/reference/purhrt.html>

The National Registry of Exonerations (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/Exonerations-in-the-United-States-Map.aspx>

The Purple Heart (n.d.). *U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/celebrate/purple-heart.pdf>

Theriault, A., & Gazzola, N. (2005). Feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, and incompetence among experienced therapists. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 5(1), 11-18.

Tlmpar80. (2009, November 14). The two-star general who wasn't. *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. Retrieved on February 25, 2016 from <http://www.ramonasentinel.com/news/2009/nov/14/the-two-star-general-who-wasn't/>

- Tracy, J.L., Cheng, J.T., Robins, R.W., & Trzesniewski, K.H. (2009). Authentic and hubristic pride: The affective core of self-esteem and narcissism. *Self and Identity*, 8(2-3), 196-213.
- Turner, T.A. (1995). Correspondence: Wandering patients in the veterans affairs system. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 323(23), 1583.
- Turner, J. & Reid, S. (2002). Munchausen's syndrome. *The Lancet*, 359, 346-349.
- Unauthorized wearing prohibited, 10 U.S.C. §771 (1956).
- Uniform of armed forces and Public Health Service, 18 U.S.C. §702, (1994).
- United States v. Alvarez, 132 S.Ct. 2537, (2012).
- United States v. McGuinn, 07 Cr. 471, (2007).
- United States v. Strandlof, 09 Cr. 497, (2012).
- Uriarte, M. (2016). *The White Donkey: Terminal Lance*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.
- U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet: Defense Superior Service Medal (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.afpc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=7731>
- U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.a.). Population clock. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/>
- U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.b.). Quick Facts. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/00>
- U.S. Department of Defense (n.d.). Medal of Honor: Heroes from Iraq and Afghanistan. Retrieved on March 25, 2016 from <http://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/MOH-Special>

U.S. Department of Defense (2016). Armed forces strength figures for March 31, 2016.

Retrieved from https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_reports.jsp (Current strength link)

U.S. Department of Defense (2016b). Armed forces strength figures for June, 2016,

Women only. Retrieved from

https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_reports.jsp

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2016). *Functional organization manual – v3.1:*

Description of organization structure, missions, functions, task, and authorities.

Retrieved from http://www.va.gov/ofcadmin/docs/VA_Functional_Organization_Manual_Version_3-1.pdf

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2015, January 27). VA Homepage. Retrieved from

<http://www.va.gov/>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2015, August 24). VA claims backlog now under

100,000 – Lowest in department history. Retrieved from

<http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/22436/va-claims-backlog-now-under-100000-lowest-in-department-history/>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (n.d.a). Veterans national population by branch

(Table 4L). Retrieved from http://www.va.gov/vetdata/veteran_population.asp

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (n.d.b). Health benefits: Veterans eligibility.

Retrieved from <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/veterans.asp>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (n.d.c). Veterans compensation benefits rate tables –

Effective 12/1/14. Retrieved from http://www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/resources_comp01.asp

- Valkenaar, L.A. (2013). Civil liability approaches to the stolen valor epidemic. *St. Mary's Law Journal*, 44, 835-877.
- VandenBos, G.R. (Ed.) (2007). *APA dictionary of psychology: Malingering*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Vaughn, C. (2012, July 13). Texas veteran convicted under Stolen Valor Act doesn't want his record cleared. *McClatchyDC*. Retrieved on February 24, 2016 from <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/crime/article24732751.html>
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (n.d.). Eligibility. Retrieved from <https://www.vfw.org/Join/Eligibility/>
- Warner, R.M. (2013). *Applied statistics: From bivariate through multivariate techniques* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Washington state lawmaker alters bio after questions raised about war record. (2016, January 25). *Military Times*. Retrieved on February 11, 2016 from <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2016/01/24/washington-state-lawmaker-alters-bio-after-questions-raised-war-record/79270912/>
- Wearing of insignia of higher grade before appointment to a grade above major general or rear admiral (frocking), 10 U.S.C. §777a (2011).
- Wearing of insignia of higher grade before promotion (frocking), 10 U.S.C. §777 (1996/2011).
- Weir, K. (2013). Feel like a fraud? *GradPsych*, 11(4), 24-27.
- Wessely, S., Unwin, C., Hotopf, M., Hull, L., Ismail, K., Nicolaou, V., & David, A. (2003). Stability of recall of military hazards over time: Evidence from the Persian Gulf War of 1991. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 183, 314-322.

When wearing by persons not an active duty authorized, 10 U.S.C. §772 (1956/1996).

Wilgoren, J. (2001, August 18). College suspends professor for Vietnam fabrications. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/08/18/us/college-suspends-professor-for-vietnam-fabrications.html>

Windsor, L., & Rizer, A. (2012, April 11). Why it's criminal to lie about military honors. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved on February 25, 2016 from <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/04/why-its-criminal-to-lie-about-military-honors/255729/>

Winters, D. & Kingseed, C.C. (2008). *Beyond band of brothers*. New York, NY: Berkley Caliber.

Withrow, B.L. (2014). *Research methods in crime and justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Yair, G., Girsh, Y., Alayan, S., Hues, H., & Or, E. (2014). "We don't need another hero": Heroes and role models in Germany and Israel. *Comparative Education Review*, 58(2), 269-295.

Yurlova, M. (2010). *Cossack girl*. Somerville, MA: Heliograph Incorporated (Original work published 1934)

Zimbardo, P. (2008). *The Lucifer effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*. New York, NY: Random House Trade Paperbacks.

Zimmerman, L., Shalvi, S., & Bereby-Meyer, Y. (2014). Self-reported ethical risk taking tendencies predict actual dishonesty. *Judgment and Decision Making*, 9(1), 58-64.

APPENDIX A

Personal Decorations for the Marine Corps, Navy, Army, Air Force, and the Coast Guard.

Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast guard	General
Medal of Honor - Navy		Medal of Honor - Army	Medal of Honor – Air Force	Medal of Honor - Navy	
Brevet Medal (no longer awarded)					
Service Cross Medals, awarded for extraordinary heroism					
Navy Cross		Distinguished Service Cross (Earlier Certificate of Merit)	Air Force Cross		
Distinguished service medals					
Defense Distinguished Service Medal					
				Transportation Distinguished Service Medal	
Navy Distinguished Service Medal		Distinguished Service Medal	Air Force Distinguished Service Medal	Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal	
Silver Star					
Defense Superior Service Medal					

(continued)

Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast guard	General
Legion of Merit (Chief commander; Commander; Officer; Legionnaire)					
Distinguished Flying Cross					
Medals for non-combat heroism					
Navy and Marine Corps Medal		Soldier's Medal	Airman's Medal	Coast Guard Medal	
Bronze Star (awarded for heroism or meritorious service in a combat zone, a "V" device is added for heroism)					
Purple Heart (awarded for being wounded in combat)					
Meritorious service medals					
Defense Meritorious Service Medal					
Meritorious Service Medal					
Air Medal					
			Aerial Achievement Medal		
Commendation medals					
Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal		Army Commendation Medal	Air Force Commendation Medal	Coast Guard Commendation Medal	Joint Service Commendation Medal

(continued)

Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast guard	General
Achievement medals					
Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal		Army Achievement Medal	Air Force Achievement Medal	Coast Guard Achievement Medal;	Joint Service Achievement Medal
				Commandant's Letter of Commendation Ribbon	
Combat Action Ribbons					
Combat Action Ribbon		Combat Infantryman Badge	Air Force Combat Action Ribbon	Combat Action Ribbon	

APPENDIX B

United States Military Unit Awards

Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast guard	General
Presidential Unit Citations					
Presidential Unit Citation					
Joint Meritorious Unit Award					
		Army Valorous Unit Award			
Meritorious Unit Commendations					
Navy Unit Commendation		Meritorious Unit Commendation	Air Force Outstanding Unit Award	Coast Guard Unit Commendation	
Meritorious Unit Commendation		Army Superior Unit Award	Air Force Organizational Excellence Award	Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation	
				Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation	
Efficiency Awards					
Navy "E" Ribbon				Coast Guard "E" Ribbon	

APPENDIX C

United States Campaign and Service Awards and service Ribbons

Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast guard	General
Prisoner of War Medal					
			Combat Readiness Medal		
			Outstanding Airman of the Year Ribbon	Enlisted Person of the Year Ribbon	
			Air Force Recognition Ribbon		
Good Conduct Medals					
Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal	Navy Good Conduct Medal	Army Good Conduct Medal	Air Force Good Conduct Medal	Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal	
Reserve Medals					
Selected Marine Corps Reserve Medal	Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal	Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal	Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal	Coast Guard Reserve Good Conduct Medal	Armed Forces Reserve Medal
Expeditionary Medals					
Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal	Navy Expeditionary				
Occupation Medals					
Navy Occupation Service Medal	Army of Occupation Medal		Navy Occupation Service Medal		

(continued)

Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast guard	General
General Service Medals					
National Defense Service Medal Global War on Terrorism Service Medal Korea Defense Service Medal Armed Forces Service Medal Humanitarian Service Medal Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal					
Special Service Medal					
			Air and Space Campaign Medal Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal	Coast Guard Arctic Circle Medal	Antarctica Service Medal
Campaign Medals					
Dewey Medal a.k.a. Battle of Manila Bay Specially Meritorious Medal Sampson Medal Spanish Campaign Medal (Army; Navy and Marine Corps) Philippine Campaign Medal (Army; Navy) China Campaign Medal Philippine Congressional Medal Civil War Campaign Medal (Army; Navy) Indian Campaign Medal China Relief Expedition Medal Army of Cuban Pacification Medal Navy Cuban Pacification Medal Nicaraguan Campaign Medal					

(continued)

Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast guard	General
		Army of Cuban Occupation Medal Mexican Service Medal (Army; Navy) Haitian Campaign Medal (Navy) Spanish War Service Medal (Army) Army of Puerto Rican Occupation Medal World War I Victory Medal Dominican Campaign Medal Haitian Campaign Medal (1919-1920) NC-4 Medal Second Nicaraguan Medal Yangtze Service Medal Byrd Antarctic Expedition Medal Second Byrd Antarctic Expedition Medal Navy and Marine Corps Expeditionary Medals China Service Medal American Defense Service Medal Army of Occupation of Germany – WWI American Campaign Medal Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal Peary Polar Expedition Medal World War II Victory Medal United States Antarctic Expedition Medal Army of Occupation Medal Navy Occupation Service Medal Medal for Humane Action Korean Service Medal Antarctica Service Medal Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal Vietnam Service Medal			

(continued)

Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast guard	General
		Coast Guard Arctic Service Medal Navy Arctic Service Ribbon Southwest Asia Service Medal Kosovo Campaign Medal Afghanistan Campaign Medal Iraq Campaign Medal Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal Global War on Terrorism Service Medal Korea Defense Service Medal Armed Forces Service Medal Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal (Air Force) Operation Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal			

APPENDIX D

United States Service and Training Awards

Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast guard	General
Recruiting Service Ribbons					
Marine Corps Recruiting Ribbon	Navy Recruiting Service Ribbon		Air Force Recruiting Ribbon	Coast Guard Recruiting Service Ribbon	
Training Service Ribbon					
Marine Corps Drill Instructor Ribbon Marine Corps Combat Instructor Ribbon	Navy Recruit Training Service Ribbon		Air Force Military Training Instructor Ribbon		
Guard Ribbons					
Marine Corps Security Guard Ribbon	Navy Ceremonial Guard Ribbon				
Professional Development Ribbons					
		Army NCO Professional Development Ribbon	Air Force NCO PME Graduate Ribbon		
	Navy Basic Military Training Honor Graduate Ribbon		Air Force Basic Military Training Honor Graduate Ribbon	Coast Guard Basic Training Honor Graduate Ribbon	
		Army Service Ribbon	Air Force Training Ribbon		

APPENDIX E

United States Military paygrade and rank

Paygrade	Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast Guard
Enlisted ranks					
E-1	Private	Seaman recruit	Private	Airman basic	Seaman recruit
E-2	Private First Class	Seaman apprentice	Private 2	Airman	Seaman apprentice
E-3	Lance Corporal	Seaman	Private First Class	Airman first class	Seaman
E-4	Corporal	Petty officer third class	Specialist/ Corporal	Senior airman	Petty officer third class
E-5	Sergeant	Petty officer second class	Sergeant	Staff sergeant	Petty officer second class
E-6	Staff sergeant	Petty officer first class	Staff sergeant	Technical sergeant	Petty officer first class
E-7	Gunnery sergeant	Chief petty officer	Sergeant first class	Master sergeant	Chief petty officer
E-8	Master sergeant/ First sergeant	Senior chief petty officer	Master sergeant/ First sergeant	Senior master sergeant	Senior chief petty officer
E-9	Master gunnery sergeant/ Sergeant major/ Sergeant major of the Marine Corps	Master chief petty officer/ Command master chief petty officer/ Force master chief petty officer/ Fleet master chief petty officer/ Master chief petty officer of the Navy	Sergeant major/ Command sergeant major/ Sergeant major of the Army	Chief master sergeant/ Command chief master sergeant/ Chief master sergeant of the Air Force	Master chief petty officer/ Command master chief petty officer/ Master chief petty officer of the Coast Guard

(continued)

Paygrade	Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast Guard
Warrant Officer ranks					
W-1	Warrant officer 1	Not used	Warrant officer 1	Discontinued	Not used
W-2	Chief warrant officer 2	Chief warrant officer 2	Chief warrant officer 2	Discontinued	Chief warrant officer 2
W-3	Chief warrant officer 3	Chief warrant officer 3	Chief warrant officer 3	Discontinued	Chief warrant officer 3
W-4	Chief warrant officer 4	Chief warrant officer 4	Chief warrant officer 4	Discontinued	Chief warrant officer 4
W-5	Chief warrant officer 5	Chief warrant officer 5	Chief warrant officer 5	None	Not used
Officer ranks					
O-1	Second lieutenant	Ensign	Second Lieutenant	Second lieutenant	Ensign
O-2	First lieutenant	Lieutenant (junior grade)	First lieutenant	First lieutenant	Lieutenant (junior grade)
O-3	Captain	Lieutenant	Captain	Captain	Lieutenant
O-4	Major	Lieutenant commander	Major	Major	Lieutenant commander
O-5	Lieutenant colonel	Commander	Lieutenant colonel	Lieutenant colonel	Commander
O-6	Colonel	Captain	Colonel	Colonel	Captain
O-7	Brigadier general	Rear admiral (lower half)	Brigadier general	Brigadier general	Rear admiral (lower half)

(continued)

Paygrade	Marine Corps	Navy	Army	Air Force	Coast Guard
O-8	Major general	Rear admiral	Major general	Major general	Rear admiral
O-9	Lieutenant general	Vice admiral	Lieutenant general	Lieutenant general	Vice admiral
O-10	General	Admiral	General	General	Admiral
O-11	None	Fleet admiral	General of the Army	General of the Air Force	None

APPENDIX F

United States military codes (UCMJ) relevant to stolen valor

Code	Title	Text
10 U.S.C. 907/ UCMJ Article 107	False official statements	Any person subject to this chapter who, with intent to deceive, signs any false record, return, regulation, order, or other official document, knowing it to be false, or makes any other false official statement knowing it to be false, shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.
10 U.S.C. 908/ UCMJ Article 108	Military property of United States – Loss, damage, destruction, or wrongful disposition	Any person subject to this chapter who, without proper authority (1) sells or otherwise disposes of; (2) willfully or through neglect damages, destroys, or loses; or (3) willfully or through neglect suffers to be lost, damaged, sold, or wrongfully disposed of; any military property of the United States, shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.
10 U.S.C. 932/ UCMJ Article 132	Frauds against the United States	Any person subject to this chapter – (1) who, knowing it to be false or fraudulent – (A) makes any claim against the United States or any officer thereof; or (B) presents to any person in the civil or military service thereof, for approval or payment, any claim against the United States or any officer thereof; (2) who, for the purpose of obtaining the approval, allowance, or payment of any claim against the United States or any officer thereof (A) makes or uses any writing or other paper knowing it to contain false or fraudulent statements; (B) makes an oath to any fact or to any writing or other paper knowing the oath to be false; or (C) forges or counterfeits any signature upon any writing or other paper, or uses any such signature knowing it to be forged or counterfeited; (3) who, having charge, possession, custody, or control of any money, or other property of the United States, furnished or intended for the armed forces thereof, knowingly delivers to any person having authority to receive it, any amount thereof less than that for which he receives a certificate or receipt; or (4) who, being authorized to make or deliver any paper certifying the receipt of any property of the United States furnished or intended for the armed forces thereof, makes or delivers to any person such writing without having full knowledge of the truth of the statements therein contained and with intent to defraud the United States; shall, upon conviction, be punished as a court-martial may direct.
UCMJ Article 134	General Article - Impersonating a commissioned, warrant, noncommissioned, or petty officer, or an agent or official	Though not specifically mentioned in this chapter, all disorders and neglects to the prejudice of good order and discipline in the armed forces, all conduct of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces, and crimes and offenses not capital, of which persons subject to this chapter may be guilty, shall be taken cognizance of by a general, special, or summary court-martial, according to the nature and degree of the offense, and shall be punished at the discretion of that court.

APPENDIX G

United States Federal Laws relevant to stolen valor

Code	Title	Text
10 U.S.C. 771	Unauthorized wearing prohibited	Except as otherwise provided by law, no person except a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps, as the case may be, may wear – (1) the uniform, or a distinctive part of the uniform, of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps; or (2) a uniform any part of which is similar to a distinctive part of the uniform of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps.
10 U.S.C. 772	When wearing by persons not on active duty authorized	(a) A member of the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard may wear the uniform prescribed for the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard, as the case may be. (b) A member of the Naval Militia may wear the uniform prescribed for the Naval Militia. (c) A retired officer of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps may bear the title and wear the uniform of his retired grade. (d) A person who is discharged honorably or under honorable conditions from the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps may wear his uniform while going from the place of discharge to his home, within three months after his discharge. (e) A person not on active duty who served honorably in time of war in the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps may bear the title, and, when authorized by regulations prescribed by the President, wear the uniform, of the highest grade held by him during the war. (f) While portraying a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps, an actor in a theatrical or motion-picture production may wear the uniform of that armed force if the portrayal does not tend to discredit that armed force. (g) An officer or resident of a veterans' home administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs may wear such uniform as the Secretary of the military department concerned may prescribe. (h) While attending a course of military instruction conducted by the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps, a civilian may wear the uniform prescribed by that armed force if the wear of such uniform is specifically authorized under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the military department concerned. (i) Under such regulations as the Secretary of the Air Force may prescribe, a citizen of a foreign country who graduates from an Air Force school may wear the appropriate aviation badge of the Air Force. (j) A person in any of the following categories may wear the uniform prescribed for that category: (1) Members of the Boy Scouts of America. (2) Members of any other organization designated by the Secretary of a military department.
10 U.S.C. 773	When distinctive insignia required	(a) A person for whom one of the following uniforms is prescribed may wear it, if it includes distinctive insignia prescribed by the Secretary of the military department concerned to distinguish it from the uniform of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps, as the case may be: (1) The uniform

		<p>prescribed by the university, college, or school for an instructor or member of the organized cadet corps of – (A) a State university or college, or a public high school, having a regular course of military instruction; or (B) an educational institution having a regular course of military instruction, and having a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps as instructor in military science and tactics. (2) The uniform prescribed by a military society composed of persons discharged honorably or under honorable conditions from the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps to be worn by a member of that society when authorized by regulations prescribed by the President. (b) A uniform prescribed under subsection (a) may not include insignia of grade the same as, or similar to, those prescribed for officers of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps. (c) Under such regulations as the Secretary of the military department concerned may prescribe, any person who is permitted to attend a course of instruction prescribed for members of a reserve officers’ training corps, and who is not a member of that corps, may, while attending that course of instruction, wear the uniform of that corps.</p>
10 U.S.C. 777	Wearing of insignia of higher grade before promotion (frocking): authority; restrictions	<p>(a) Authority. – An officer in a grade below the grade of major general or, in the case of the Navy, rear admiral, who has been selected for promotion to the next higher grade may be authorized, under regulations and policies of the Department of Defense and subject to subsection (b), to wear the insignia for that next higher grade. An officer who is so authorized to wear the insignia of the next higher grade is said to be “frocked” to that grade. (b) Restrictions – An officer may not be authorized to wear the insignia for a grade as described in subsection (a) unless – (1) the Senate has given its advice and consent to the appointment of the officer to that grade; (2) the officer is serving in, or has received orders to serve in, a position for which that grade is authorized; and (3) in the case of an officer selected for promotion to a grade above colonel or, in the case of an officer of the Navy, a grade above captain — (A) authority for that officer to wear the insignia of that grade has been approved by the Secretary of defense (or a civilian officer within the Office of the Secretary of Defense whose appointment was made with the advice and consent of the Senate and to whom the Secretary delegates such approval authority); and (B) the Secretary of Defense has submitted to Congress a written notification of the intent to authorize the officer to wear the insignia for that grade. (c) Benefits Not To Be Construed as Accruing. – (1) Authority provided to an officer as described in subsection (a) to wear the insignia of the next higher grade may not be construed as conferring authority for that officer to – (A) be paid the rate of pay provided for an officer in that grade having the same number of years of service as that officer; or (B) assume any legal authority associated with that grade. (2) The period for which an officer wears the insignia of the next higher grade under such authority may not to be taken into account for any of the following purposes: (A) Seniority in that grade. (B) Time of service in that grade. (d) Limitation on Number of Officers Frocked To Specified Grades. – (1) The total number of colonels, Navy captains, brigadier generals, and rear</p>

		<p>admirals (lower half) on the active-duty list who are authorized as described in subsection (a) to wear the insignia for the next higher grade may not exceed 85. (2) The number of officers of an armed force on the active-duty list who are authorized as described in subsection (a) to wear the insignia for a grade to which a limitation on total number applies under section 523(a) of this title for a fiscal year may not exceed 1 percent, or, for the grades of colonel and Navy captain, 2 percent, of the total number provided for the officers in that grade in that armed force in the administration of the limitation under the section for that fiscal year.</p>
10 U.S.C. 777a	Wearing of insignia of higher grade before appointment to a grade above major general or rear admiral (frocking): authority; restrictions	<p>(a) Authority. – An officer serving in a grade below the grade of lieutenant general or, in the case of the Navy, vice admiral, has been selected for appointment to the grade of lieutenant general or general, or, in the case of the Navy, admiral or admiral, and an officer serving in the grade of lieutenant general or vice admiral who has been selected for appointment to the grade of general or admiral, may be authorized, under regulations and policies of the Department of Defense and subject to subsection (b), to wear the insignia for that higher grade for a period of up to 14 days before assuming the duties of a position for which the higher grade is authorized. An officer who is so authorized to wear the insignia of a higher grade is said to be “frocked” to that grade. (b) Restrictions. – An officer may not be authorized to wear the insignia for a grade as described in subsection(a) unless – (1) the Senate has given its advice and consent to the appointment of the officer to that grade; (2) the officer has received orders to serve in a position outside the military department of that officer for which that grade is authorized; (3) the Secretary of Defense (or a civilian officer within the Office of the Secretary of Defense whose appointment was made with the advice and consent of the Senate and to whom the Secretary delegates such approval authority) has given approval for the officer to wear the insignia for that grade before assuming the duties of a position for which that grade is authorized; and (4) the Secretary of Defense has submitted to Congress a written notification of the intent to authorize the officer to wear the insignia for that grade. (c) Benefits Not to Be Construed as Accruing. – (1) Authority provided to an officer as described in subsection (a) to wear the insignia of a higher grade may not be construed as conferring authority for that officer to – (A) be paid the rate of pay provided for an officer in that grade having the same number of years of service as that officer; or (B) assume any legal authority associated with that grade. (2) The period for which an officer wears the insignia of a higher grade under such authority may not be taken into account for any of the following purposes: (A) Seniority in that grade. (B) Time of service in that grade. (d) Limitation on Number of Officers Frocked. – The total number of officers who are authorized to wear the insignia for a higher grade under this section shall count against the limitation in section 777(d) of this title on the total number of officers authorized to wear the insignia of a higher grade.</p>

18 U.S.C. §702	Uniform of armed forces and public health service	Whoever, in any place within the jurisdiction of the United States or in the canal Zone, without authority, wears the uniform or a distinctive part thereof or anything similar to a distinctive part of the uniform of any of the armed forces of the United States, Public Health Service or any auxiliary of such, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than seix months, or both.
18 U.S.C. §912	Officer or employee of the United States	Whoever falsely assumes or pretends to be an officer or employee acting under the authority of the United States or any department, agency or officer thereof, and acts as such, or in such pretended character demands or obtains any money, paper, document, or thing of value, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than three years, or both.
18 U.S.C. §704	Stolen Valor Act of 2013	<p>(a) In General. – Whoever knowingly purchases, attempts to purchase, solicits for purchase, mails, ships, imports, exports, produces blank certificates of receipt for, manufactures, sells, attempts to sell, advertises for sale, trades, barter, or exchanges for anything of value any decoration or medal authorized by Congress for the armed forces of the United States, or any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, or the ribbon, button, or rosette of any such badge, decoration or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof, except when authorized under regulations made pursuant to law, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.</p> <p>(b) Fraudulent Representations About Receipt of Military Decorations or Medals. – Whoever, with intent to obtain money, property, or other tangible benefit, fraudulently holds oneself out to be a recipient of a decoration or medal described in subsection (c)(2) or (d) shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than one year, or both.</p> <p>(c) Enhanced Penalty for Offenses Involving Congressional Medal of Honor. – (1) In General. – If a decoration or medal involved in an offense under subsection (a) is a congressional Medal of Honor, in lieu of the punishment provided in that subsection, the offender shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both. (2) Congressional Medal of Honor Defined. – In this subsection, the term “Congressional Medal of Honor” means—(A) a medal of honor awarded under section 3741, 6241, or 8741 of title 10 or section 491 of title 14; (B) a duplicate medal of honor issued under section 3754, 6256, or 8754 of title 10 or section 504 of title 14; or (C) a replacement of a medal of honor provided under section 3747, 6253, 8747 of title 10 or section 501 of title 14. (d) Enhanced Penalty for Offenses Involving Certain Other Medals. – (1) In General. – If a decoration or medal involved in an offense described in subsection (a) is a distinguished-service cross awarded under section 3742 of title 10, a Navy cross awarded under section 6242 of title 10, an Air Force cross awarded under section 8742 of title 10, a silver star awarded under section 3746, 6244, or 8746 of title 10, a Purple Heart awarded under section 1129 of title 10, a combat badge, or any replacement or duplicate medal for such medal as authorized by law, in lieu of the punishment provided in the applicable subsection, the offender shall be fined</p>

		under this title, imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both. (2) Combat Badge Defined. – In this subsection, the term “combat badge” means a Combat Infantryman’s Badge, Combat Action Badge, Combat Medical Badge, Combat Action Ribbon, or Combat Action Medal.
18 U.S.C. §704	Military medals and decorations statute prior to the Stolen Valor Act of 2005	(a) Whoever knowingly wears, manufactures, or sells any decoration or medal authorized by Congress for the armed forces of the United States, or any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, or the ribbon, button, or rosette of any such badge, decoration or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof, except when authorized under regulations made pursuant to law, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than six months, or both. (b) (1) If a decoration or medal involved in an offense under subsection (a) is a Congressional Medal of Honor, in lieu of the punishment provided in that subsection, the offender shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both. (2) (A) As used in subsection (a) with respect to a Congressional Medal of Honor, “sells” includes trades, barter, or exchanges for anything of value. (B) As used in this subsection, “Congressional Medal of Honor” means – (i) a medal of honor awarded under section 3741, 6241, or 8741 of title 10 or section 491 of title 14; (ii) a duplicate medal of honor issued under section 3754, 6256, or 8754 of title 10 or section 504 of title 14; or (iii) a replacement of a medal of honor provided under section 3747, 6253, or 8747 of title 10 or section 501 of title 14.

APPENDIX H

United States State laws relevant to stolen valor

Code	Title	Text
Alabama		
13A-8-10.5	Alabama Stolen Valor Act of 2015	<p>(a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings: (1) CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR. Includes any of the following: a. A Medal of Honor awarded under Section 3741,6241, or 8741 of Title 10 or Section 491 of Title 14 of the United States Code. b. A duplicate Medal of Honor issued under section 3754, 6256, or 8754 of Title 10 or Section 504 of Title 14 of the United States Code. c. A replacement of a Medal of Honor provided under Section 3747, 6253, or 8747 of Title 10 or Section 51 of Title 14 of the United States Code. (2) MATERIAL GAIN. Something of value received, bestowed, conferred, presented, granted, contributed, funded, gifted, donated, bequeathed, decided, or approved, regardless of the monetary, remunerative, or tangible value. This includes, but is not limited to, food, lodging, compensation, travel expenses, placards, public benefits, public relief, financial relief, or anything in which or for which a tangible benefit was gained, even if the value such is de minimis. (b) A person commits the crime of theft of valor if he or she does any of the following: (1) Knowingly wears, purchases, attempts to purchase, solicits for purchase, mails, ships, imports, exports, produces blank certificates of receipt for, manufactures, sells, attempts to sell, advertises for sale, trades, barter, or exchanges anything of value for any of the following and receives a material gain, unless the person is authorized under applicable state or federal regulations or law: a. Any decoration or medal authorized by Congress for the Armed Forces of the United States. b. A service medal or badge awarded to a member of the Armed Forces of the United States. c. A ribbon, button, or rosette of any badge, decoration or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof. (2) Falsely represents himself or herself, verbally or in writing, to have been awarded any of the following in order to receive, or attempt to receive, a material gain: a. Any decoration or medal authorized by Congress for the Armed Forces of the United States. b. A service medal or badge awarded to a member of the Armed Forces of the United States. c. A ribbon, button, or rosette of any badge, decoration or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof. (c)(1) Except as provided in subdivisions (2) and (3), theft of valor is a Class B misdemeanor. (2) If any of the following decorations or medals, including a duplicate or replacement thereof, are the subject of an offense under subsection (b), the offense is a Class A misdemeanor and a minimum fine of five thousand</p>

		dollars (\$5,000) shall be imposed: a. A Distinguished-Service Cross awarded under Section 3742 of Title 10 of the United States Code. b. A Navy Cross awarded under Section 6242 of Title 10 of the United States Code. c. An Air Force Cross awarded under Section 8742 of Section 10 of the United States Code. d. A Silver Star awarded under Section 3746, 6244, or 8746 of Title 10 of the United States Code. e. A Purple Heart awarded under Section 1129 of Title 10 of the United States Code. (3) If a Congressional Medal of Honor is the subject of an offense under subsection (b), the offense is a Class C felony. (d) Notwithstanding any other law, the limitation period for any prosecution under this section does not commence or begin to accrue until the discovery of the facts constituting the offense.
Alaska		
None		
Arizona		
32-2451	Impersonation of a public officer; display of identification	A. No licensee, associate, registrant or employee of a licensee may wear a uniform, use a title, insignia, badge or identification card or make any statement that would lead a person to believe that he is connected in any way with the federal government, a state government or any political subdivision of a state government unless he is authorized by proper authorities to do so. No badge of any type may be used, shown or offered as identification in conjunction with the identification card or independently. B. A licensee or registrant, on claiming to be a private investigator, shall display the identification card issued by the department to such persons as may have reasonable cause to verify the validity of the license or registration. The licensee or registrant shall display the identification card for a reasonable period of time for the requester to verify the information on the identification card.
Arkansas		
5-37-208		(a) (1) A person commits criminal impersonation in the first degree if, with the purpose to induce a person to submit to pretended official authority for the purpose to injure or defraud the person, the person: (A) Pretends to be a law enforcement officer by wearing or displaying, without authority, any uniform or badge by which a law enforcement officer is lawfully distinguished; or (B) Uses a motor vehicle designed, equipped, or marked with an emblem, logo, marking, decal, insignia, or design so as to resemble a motor vehicle or motorcycle belonging to a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency or law enforcement officer. (2) Criminal impersonation in the first degree is a Class D felony. (b) (1) A person commits criminal impersonation in the second degree if the person does an act in his or her pretended or assumed capacity or character with the purpose to injure, defraud, harass, or intimidate another person and the actor: (A) Assumes a false identity;

		(B) Pretends to be a representative of a person or organization; (C) Pretends to be an officer or employee of the government other than a law enforcement officer described in subsection (a) of this section; (D) Pretends that he or she is a law enforcement officer when the person is not a law enforcement officer; or €Pretends to have a handicap or disability. (2) Criminal impersonation in the second degree is a: (A) Class D felony if: (i) The victim of the offense is an animal owner; and (ii) An animal of the owner is seized as a result of the offense; or (B) Class A misdemeanor if otherwise committed. (c) As used in this section: (1) “Animal” means the same as defined in § 5-62-105; and (2) “Owner” means the same as defined in § 5-62-102. (d) A circuit court or district court in which a charge is filed under subsection (a) of this section may immediately order the removal of any emblems, logos, markings, decals, insignia, or designs that are the subject of a criminal charge under this section.
California		
Penal Code 532b		(a) Any person who falsely represents himself or herself as a veteran or ex-serviceman of any war in which the United States was engaged, in connection with the soliciting of aid or the sale or attempted sale of any property, is guilty of a misdemeanor. (b) Any person who falsely claims, or presents himself or herself, to be a veteran or member of the Armed Forces of the United States, with the intent to defraud, is guilty of a misdemeanor. (c) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), any person who, orally, in writing, or by wearing any military decoration, falsely represents himself or herself to have been awarded any military decoration, with the intent to defraud, is guilty of a misdemeanor. (2) This offense is an infraction or a misdemeanor, subject to Sections 19.6, 19.7, and 19.8, if the person committing the offense is a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States. (3) For purposes of this subdivision, “military decoration” means any decoration or medal from the Armed Forces of the United States, the California National Guard, the State Military Reserve, or the Naval Militia, or any service medals or badges awarded to the member of those forces, or the ribbon, button, or rosette of that badge, decoration, or medal, or any colorable imitation of that item. (d) This section does not apply to face-to-face solicitations involving less than ten dollars (\$10). (e) This section, Section 3003 of the Government Code, and Section 1821 of the Military and Veterans Code shall be known and may be cited as the California Stolen Valor Act.
Colorado		
None		

Connecticut		
53-378	Wearing of armed forces uniform. False representation of award of armed forces decoration, medal, badge, ribbon, button or rosette	(a) Any person, other than an officer or enlisted man or woman of the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, or any reserve component thereof, or of the state, as defined in section 27-2, or a member of a school or college military or naval organization, organized, uniformed and drilling as such, or a resident of any veterans' or soldiers' home, or a police officer, who, at any time, wears the uniform, or any part of the uniform, of any of said armed forces, reserve components or organizations, within the state, shall be fined not less than five hundred dollars or more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than six months, or both, provided nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting any person having been honorably discharged from any of said armed forces, reserve components or organizations from wearing the person's uniform in accordance with the laws of the United States or the state and the regulations governing any said armed forces, reserve components or organizations, or any person taking part in any play, opera, theater or other entertainment from wearing such uniform while actually engaged in such entertainment. (b) Any person who, with the intent to obtain money, property or other tangible benefit, falsely represents himself or herself, orally or in writing, to have been awarded any decoration or medal authorized by the United States Congress for the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, or any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such armed forces, or the ribbon, button or rosette of any such decoration, medal or badge, or any colorable imitation thereof, shall be fined not less than five hundred dollars or more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than six months, or both.
Delaware		
80 (§907C)		Impersonation as a member or veteran of the United States Armed Forces, Class A misdemeanor. (a) A person is guilty of criminal impersonation of a member or veteran of the United States Armed Forces when they intentionally and without lawful authority impersonate or otherwise hold themselves out to be a veteran or member of the United States Armed Forces or to hold oneself out to have an unearned rank in the United States Armed Forces with the purpose of obtaining money, property, or other tangible benefit. (b) Any person found guilty of criminal impersonation of a member or veteran of the United States Armed Forces shall be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor and receive a minimum fine of not less than \$1000, which shall not be subject to suspension.
District of Colombia		
None		
Florida		
None		

Georgia		
None		
Hawaii		
None		
Idaho		
18-3126A	False pretenses, cheats and representations	Acquisition of personal identifying information by false authority. It is unlawful for any person to falsely assume or pretend to be a member of the armed forces of the United States or an officer or employee acting under authority of the United States or any department, agency or office thereof or of the state of Idaho or any department, agency or office thereof, and in such pretended character, seek, demand, obtain or attempt to obtain personal identifying information of another person.
Illinois*		
2	720ILCS5/17-False personation; solicitation	<p>(a) False personation; solicitation. (1) A person commits a false personation when he or she knowingly and falsely represents himself or herself to be a member or representative of any veterans' or public safety personnel organization or a representative of any charitable organization, or when he or she knowingly exhibits or uses in any manner any decal, badge or insignia of any charitable, public safety personnel, or veterans' organization when not authorized to do so by the charitable, public safety personnel, or veterans' organization. "Public safety personnel organization" has the meaning ascribed to that term in Section 1 of the Solicitation for Charity Act. (2) A person commits a false personation when he or she knowingly and falsely represents himself or herself to be a veteran in seeking employment or public office. In this paragraph, "veteran" means a person who has served in the Armed Services or Reserve Forces of the United States. (2.5) A person commits</p> <p>(e) False medals. (1) A person commits a false personation if he or she knowingly and falsely represents himself or herself to be a recipient of, or wears on his or her person, any of the following medals if that medal was not awarded to that person by the United States Government, irrespective of branch of service: The Congressional Medal of Honor, The distinguished Service Cross, The Air Force Cross, The Silver Star, The Bronze Star, or the Purple Heart. (2) It is a defense to a prosecution under paragraph (1) that the medal is used, or is intended to be used, exclusively: (A) for a dramatic presentation, such as a theatrical, film, or television production, or a historical re-enactment; or (B) for a costume worn, or intended to be worn, by a person under 18 years of age. (f) Sentence. (1) A violation of paragraph (a) (8) is a petty offense subject to a fine of not less than \$5 nor more than \$100, and the person, firm, copartnership, or corporation commits</p>

		<p>an additional petty offense for each day he, she, or it continues to commit the violation. A violation of paragraph (c) (1) is a petty offense, and the company, association, or person commits an additional petty offense for each day he, she, or it continues to commit the violation. A violation of subsection €is a petty offense for which the offender shall be fined at least \$100 and not more than \$200.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>(g) A violation of subsection (a)(1) through (a) (7) or subsection €of this Section may be accomplished in person or by any means of communication, including but not limited to the use of an Internet website or any form of electronic communication.</p>
Indiana		
1187	Stolen valor	Stolen valor. Makes it committing stolen valor, a Class A misdemeanor, for a person to knowingly or intentionally, with the intent to obtain money, property, or another benefit: (1) fraudulently represent himself or herself to be an active member or veteran of the armed forces of the United States; (2) use falsified military identification; or (3) fraudulently claim to be the recipient of certain military honors.
Iowa		
718B.1	Impersonating a decorated military veteran.	A person who impersonates a decorated military veteran with the intent to deceive another person for the purpose of gaining any real or anticipated monetary gain commits a serious misdemeanor. For the purposes of this section, “decorated military veteran” means a veteran of the armed forces of the United States who has been awarded any decoration or medal authorized by the United States Congress for service in the armed forces of the United States, any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, or the ribbon, button, or rosette of any such badge, decoration, or medal.
Kansas		
21-6410	False membership claim	(a) A false membership claim is knowingly and falsely representing oneself to be a member of a fraternal or veteran’s organization. (b) False membership claim is a class C misdemeanor.
Kentucky		
434.444	Misrepresenting current or former military status – Exemptions – Penalties –	(1) A person is guilty of misrepresenting current or former military status when he or she, for the purpose of direct or indirect monetary gain, and with intent to defraud, obtain employment, or be elected or appointed to public office, intentionally makes: (a) A claim, orally, in writing, or by any fraudulent display, that he or she is entitled to wear military awards, military decorations, or military rank; (b) A claim that he or she served in the United States Armed Forces, a Reserve

	Transfer of fines revenue – Short title.	<p>Component thereof, or the National Guard; or (c) A claim that he or she served in the military during a wartime era, whether or not there was a declared war, or served in a combat zone, or makes any misrepresentation of actual military service. (2) This section shall not apply to a person who or an organization which: (a) Is reenacting military history or a military event; (b) Is playing the part of a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, a Reserve Component thereof, or the National Guard in a play, motion picture television production, or other dramatic production, or at a patriotic or civic event; (c) Is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, a Reserve Component thereof, or the National Guard and, as part of a military assignment, is representing a member of the Armed Forces in a previous war or time period for ceremonial, recruiting, or training purposes; (d) Is an employee of or volunteer for a museum and, as a part of their duties, is representing a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, a Reserve Component thereof, or the National Guard for ceremonial, historical, or training purposes; (e) Owns, displays, purchases, sells, or trades militaria, including but not limited to medals, ribbons, and rank insignia, and does not claim to have personally earned them unless he or she is legally entitled to do so; (f) Is a natural person using his or her given name that includes a military rank, so long as he or she does not use the name to defraud another in a manner prohibited by this section; (g) Uses a name or honorary military or military-like rank which has been bestowed upon him or her by a public officer public employee, or public agency, in the name of a public officer or public agency; (h) Uses a corporate, partnership, sole proprietorship, or other name for a business or product which includes a military rank, so long as the name is not used to defraud another in a manner prohibited by this section; or (i) Holds a registered trademark which includes a military rank or honorary rank, so long as the trademark is not used to defraud another in a manner prohibited by this section. (3) Misrepresenting current or former military status is: (a) A violation of KRS 514.040 if the defendant, by the misrepresentation, obtains money or property; and (b) If the defendant, by the misrepresentation, obtains a public benefit, a violation of the applicable statute that prohibits obtaining that public benefit and provides a specific penalty. (4) If a violation of subsection (3) of this section is not involved, the defendant shall be fined and amount not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or be imprisoned in the county jail for not more than twelve (12) months, or both. (5) KRS 431.100 to the contrary notwithstanding, any fine assessed as a penalty for conviction under this section shall be transferred by the circuit clerk and deposited with the veterans program trust fund established by KRS 40.460(2)(b). (6) This section shall be cited as the Kentucky Stolen Valor Act.</p>
--	--	---

Louisiana		
RS 14: 67.29	False personation of a veteran or fraudulent representation of a veteran-owned business	A. False personation of a veteran is the false representation by a person of being a veteran, with the intent to injure, defraud, obtain economic gain, or obtain or secure any special privilege or advantage. B. Fraudulent representation of a veteran-owned business is the false representation by an owner, operator, principal, or employee of a business that the business is owned by a veteran or is a service-connected disabled veteran-owned business, with the intent to injure, defraud, obtain economic gain, or obtain or secure any special privilege or advantage. C. For the purposes of the Section, “veteran” means a person who has served in the armed services or reserve forces of the United States or Louisiana National Guard. D. Whoever commits the crime of false personation of a veteran or fraudulent representation of a veteran-owned business shall be fined not more than one thousand dollars, or imprisoned for not more than six months, or both.
Maine		
1642 (Sec. 1. 17-A MRSA §354, sub-§2)		A. Creates or reinforces an impression that is false and that the person does not believe to be true, including false impressions that the person is a veteran or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States or a state military force and false impressions as to the identity, law, value, knowledge, opinion, intention or other state of mind; except that an intention not to perform a promise, or knowledge that a promise will not be performed, may not be inferred from the fact alone that the promise was not performed.
Maryland		
68 (8-906)	Stolen Valor Act of 2016	(A) A person may not knowingly and with the intent to obtain money, property, or other tangible benefit: (1) misrepresent oneself as a member or veteran of the United States armed forces or an organized militia; or (2) falsely hold oneself out to be a recipient of any decoration or medal created by federal or State laws or regulations to honor the members or veterans of the United States armed forces or an organized militia, including: (I) A Congressional Medal of Honor; (II) A Distinguished Service Cross; (III) A Navy Cross; (IV) An Air Force Cross; (V) A Silver Star; (VI) A Bronze Star; (VII) A Purple Heart; (VIII) A Combat Infantryman’s Badge; (IX) A Combat Action Badge; (X) A Combat Medical Badge; (XI) A Combat Action Ribbon; (XII) A Combat Action Medal; (XIII) A Special Operations Identifier; or (XIV) A Special Qualification or Skill Identifier. (B) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 1 year or a fine not exceeding \$2,500 or both.
Massachusetts		
1641		1. A person commits the crime of stolen valor if he or she knowingly, with the intent to obtain money, property or another tangible benefit: (a) Fraudulently represents himself or herself to be an

		active member or veteran of the United States Navy, Army, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard, including armed forces reserves and National Guard through the unauthorized manufacture, sale, or use of military regalia or gear, including the wearing of military uniforms, or the use of falsified military identification; and obtains money, property or another tangible benefit through such fraudulent representation. (b) Fraudulently represents himself or herself to be a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Silver Star, Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman Badge, Combat Action Badge, Combat Medical Badge, Combat Action Ribbon or Air Force Combat Action Medal; and obtains money, property or another tangible benefit through such fraudulent representation; or 2. A person who commits the crime of stolen valor is guilty of a gross misdemeanor and shall be punished by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than 1 year or by a fine of \$1,000, or both such fine and imprisonment.
Michigan		
None		
Minnesota		
609.475		Whoever falsely impersonates a police or military officer or public official with intent to mislead another into believing that the impersonator is actually such officer or official is guilty of a misdemeanor.
Mississippi		
97-7-10	Fraudulent statements and representations	(1) Whoever, with the intent to defraud the state or any department, agency, office, board, commission, county, municipality or other subdivision of state or local law government, knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals or covers up by trick, scheme or device a material fact, or makes any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations, or makes or uses any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any false, fictitious or fraudulent statement or entry, shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine or not more than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$ 10,000.00) or by imprisonment for not more than five (5) years, or by both such fine and imprisonment. (2) This section shall not prohibit the prosecution under any other criminal statute of the state.
Missouri		
578.510	Misuse of military medals, penalty – misrepresentation	1. This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Stolen Valor Act of 2007”. 2. Any person who, with the intent to misrepresent himself or herself as a veteran or medal recipient, knowingly wears, purchases, attempts to purchase, solicits for purchase, mails, ships, imports, exports, produces blank certificates of receipt for, manufactures, sells, attempts to sell,

	of awarding of military medals, penalty – fraudulent use of the title of veteran, penalty (until December 31, 2016)	<p>advertises for sale, trades, barter, or exchanges for anything of value any decoration or medal authorized under chapter 41, or by the Congress for the Armed Forces of the United States, or any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, or the ribbon, button, or rosette of any badge, decoration, or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof, except when authorized under regulations promulgated under law, is guilty of a class A misdemeanor. Any second or subsequent violation of this subsection is a class D felony.</p> <p>3. Any person who misrepresents himself or herself, verbally or in writing, to have been awarded any decoration or medal authorized under chapter 41, or by Congress for the Armed Forces of the United States, any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, the ribbon, button, or rosette of any such badge, decoration, or medal, or any colorable imitation of such item is guilty of a class A misdemeanor. Any second or subsequent violation of this subsection is a class D felony.</p> <p>4. Any person who fraudulently uses the title of “veteran”, as defined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or its successor agency, in order to obtain personal benefit, monetary or otherwise, and such person does not have verifiable proof of his or her status as a veteran is guilty of a class A misdemeanor. Any second or subsequent violation of this subsection is a class D felony.</p> <p>5. If a decoration or medal involved in an offense described in subsections 2 to 4 of this section is a distinguished-service cross awarded under Section 3742 of Title 10 of the United States Code, a Navy Cross awarded under Section 6242 of Title 10 of the United States Code, and Air Force Cross awarded under Section 8742 of Section 10 of the United States Code, a Silver Star under Section 3742, 6244, or 8746 of Title 10 of the United States Code, a Purple Heart awarded under Section 1129 of Title 10 of the United States Code, or any replacement or duplicate medal for such medal as authorized by law, in lieu of the penalty provided in subsection 2, 3, or 4 of this section, the offender is guilty of a class D felony.</p> <p>6. If a decoration or medal involved in an offense described in subsections 2 to 4 of this section is the Medal of Honor awarded under Section 1560 of Title 38 of the United States Code, the offender is guilty of a class C felony.</p>
570.350.1	Stolen Valor Act of 2007 (from January 1, 2017)	<p>1. This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Stolen Valor Act of 2007”.</p> <p>2. Any person who, with the intent to misrepresent himself or herself as a veteran or medal recipient, knowingly wears, purchases, attempts to purchase, solicits for purchase, mails, ships, imports, exports, produces blank certificates of receipt for, manufactures, sells, attempts to sell, advertises for sale, trades, barter, or exchanges for anything of value any decoration or medal authorized under chapter 41, or by the Congress for the Armed Forces of the United States, or any</p>

		<p>of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, or the ribbon, button, or rosette of any badge, decoration, or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof, except when authorized under regulations promulgated under law, is guilty of a class A misdemeanor. Any second or subsequent violation of this subsection is a class E felony.</p> <p>3. Any person who misrepresents himself or herself, verbally or in writing, to have been awarded any decoration or medal authorized under chapter 41, or by Congress for the Armed Forces of the United States, any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, the ribbon, button, or rosette of any such badge, decoration, or medal, or any colorable imitation of such item is guilty of a class A misdemeanor. Any second or subsequent violation of this subsection is a class E felony.</p> <p>4. Any person who fraudulently uses the title of “veteran”, as defined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or its successor agency, in order to obtain personal benefit, monetary or otherwise, and such person does not have verifiable proof of his or her status as a veteran is guilty of a class A misdemeanor. Any second or subsequent violation of this subsection is a class E felony.</p> <p>5. If a decoration or medal involved in an offense described in subsections 2 to 4 of this section is a distinguished-service cross awarded under Section 3742 of Title 10 of the United States Code, a Navy Cross awarded under Section 6242 of Title 10 of the United States Code, and Air Force Cross awarded under Section 8742 of Section 10 of the United States Code, a Silver Star under Section 3742, 6244, or 8746 of Title 10 of the United States Code, a Purple Heart awarded under Section 1129 of Title 10 of the United States Code, or any replacement or duplicate medal for such medal as authorized by law, in lieu of the penalty provided in subsection 2, 3, or 4 of this section, the offender is guilty of a class E felony.</p> <p>6. If a decoration or medal involved in an offense described in subsections 2 to 4 of this section is the Medal of Honor awarded under Section 1560 of Title 38 of the United States Code, the offender is guilty of a class D felony.</p>
Montana		
None		
Nebraska		
None		
Nevada		
199.43	Impersonation of officer	Every person who shall falsely personate a public officer, civil or military, or a police officer, or a private individual having special authority by law to perform an act affecting the rights or interests

		of another, or who, without authority shall assume any uniform or badge by which such an officer or person is lawfully distinguished, and in such assumed character shall do any act purporting to be official, whereby another is injured or defrauded, shall be guilty of a gross misdemeanor.
New Hampshire		
None		
New Jersey		
38A:14-5	New Jersey Stolen Valor Act	Any person who knowingly, with intent to impersonate and with intent to deceive, misrepresents oneself as a member or veteran of the United States Armed Forces or organized militia by wearing the uniform or any medal or insignia authorized for use by the members or veterans of the United States Armed Forces or the organized militia, by Federal and State laws and regulations, shall be guilty of a crime of the fourth degree. Any person who knowingly, with intent to impersonate and with intent to deceive for the purpose of obtaining money, property, or other tangible benefit, misrepresents oneself as a member or veteran of the United States Armed Forces or organized militia by wearing the uniform or any medal or insignia authorized for use by the members or veterans of the United States Armed Forces or the organized militia, by Federal and State laws and regulations, shall be guilty of a crime of the third degree, subject to a minimum fine of \$1,000. Any person who knowingly, with intent to deceive for the purpose of obtaining money, property, or other tangible benefit, holds oneself out to be a recipient of any decoration or medal created by Federal and State laws and regulations to honor the members or veterans of the United States Armed Forces or the organized militia shall be guilty of a crime of the third degree, subject to a minimum fine of \$1,000. Any monies collected pursuant to this section shall be forwarded to the State Treasurer, and shall annually be appropriated to the Military Dependents Scholarship Fund, as established pursuant to P.L.2015, c.117 (C. 18A:71B-98 et seq.), in the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. Until such time as the Military Dependents Scholarship Fund is established, any monies collected pursuant to this section shall be forwarded to the State Treasurer, and deposited into the "NJ National Guard State Family Readiness Council Fund," as established, pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2011, c.117 (C.54A:9-25.29).
New Mexico		
20-11-5	Wrongful wearing of uniform; penalty	Any unauthorized person wearing a military uniform or facsimile thereof with the intent to impersonate a person with military authority is guilty of a misdemeanor; but if this offense is committed in time of war or following a declaration of martial law, the offender shall be guilty of a fourth degree felony.

New York		
7244 (190.24)	Stolen valor	A person commits the crime of stolen valor if he or she knowingly, with the intent to obtain money, property or another tangible benefit: 1. Misrepresents himself or herself as a member or veteran of the United States armed forces or organized militia by wearing the uniform or any medal or insignia authorized for use by the members or veterans of the United States armed forces or the organized militia, by federal and state laws and regulations, or 2. Holds himself or herself out to be a recipient of any decoration or medal created by federal and state laws and regulations to honor the members or veterans of the United States armed forces or the organized militia. The crime of stolen valor is a class A misdemeanor.
S5201 (section 10, subdivisions 22 and 23 & 190.28)	Stolen valor	22. “member of the military or reserves” means (A) a member of the United States army, navy, air force, marines, coast guard, army national guard, air national guard and/or reserves thereof or (B) a member of the New York guard or the New York naval militia. 23. “veteran” means a person who was a member of the military or reserves as defined in subdivision twenty-two of this section, but who has since been discharged from such services. 190.28 A person is guilty of stolen valor when he or she pretends to be a member of the military or reserves as defined by subdivision twenty-two of section 10.00 of this chapter, or pretends to be a veteran as defined by subdivision twenty-three of section 10.00 of this chapter, or wears or displays without authority, any uniform, badge or other insignia or facsimile thereof, by which such member of the military or veteran is lawfully distinguished or expresses by his or her words or actions that he or she is acting with the approval or authority of any department of defense branch or the United States coast guard for the purpose of obtaining money or other benefits. Stolen valor is a class E felony.
North Carolina		
None		
North Dakota		
None		
Ohio		
None		
Oklahoma		
72-6-1	Impersonating member or veteran of the	A. Any person who knowingly with intent to impersonate and with intent to deceive, misrepresents himself or herself as a member or veteran of the United States Armed Forces by wearing any decoration or medal authorized by the Congress of the United States for the Armed Forces of the United States, or any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of such forces, or

	United States Armed Forces	the ribbon, button, or rosette of any such badge, decoration or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof, except when authorized under regulations as authorized by the applicable federal law, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be fined One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) or be imprisoned in the county jail for a period of not more than six (6) months or both. B. If a decoration or medal involved in an offense under subsection A of this section is a Congressional Medal of Honor, the offender shall upon conviction be guilty of a felony and fined an amount not to exceed Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) or be imprisoned in the county jail for a period of not more than one (1) year, or both. C. If a person presents any falsified or altered document as proof of service or authorization for decoration or medal, such person shall be guilty of a felony and fined an amount not to exceed Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) or be imprisoned in the county jail for a period of not more than one (1) year.
Oregon		
162.365	Criminal impersonation	(1) A person commits the crime of criminal impersonation if with intent to obtain a benefit, to injure or defraud another or to facilitate an unlawful activity, the person does an act in the assumed character of: (a) A public servant; or (b) An active member or veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States. (2) It is no defense to a prosecution for criminal impersonation that: (a) The office, position or title that the person pretended to hold did not in fact exist; or (b) The unit of government that the person pretended to represent did not in fact exist. (3) (a) Criminal impersonation is a Class A misdemeanor. (b) Notwithstanding paragraph (a) of this subsection, criminal impersonation is a Class C felony if the public servant impersonated is a peace officer, judge or justice of the peace.
Pennsylvania		
43 (§6701)	Uniforms, insignia and military decorations or medals.	[A] (a) Offense defined. –Except as provided under subsection (b), a person is guilty of a summary offense if, without authority, he: (1) wears or displays the uniform, decoration, insignia or other distinctive emblem of any branch of the armed forces of the United States or of any of the several states, or of any association, for the purpose of obtaining aid or profit, or while soliciting contributions or subscriptions; or (2) wears an honorable discharge button issued or authorized by the United States. (b) False claims about receipt of military decorations or medals. – (1) Except as provided under paragraph (2), a person commits a misdemeanor of the third degree if the person falsely represents himself verbally or in writing to have been awarded any decoration or medal authorized by the Congress of the United States for the armed forces of the United States, any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of the armed forces of the United States, the ribbon, button or rosette of any badge, decoration or medal or any colorable imitation of the item

		with the intent to commit fraud, obtain employment or be elected to public office. Each violation shall constitute a separate offense. (2) (i) If a decoration or medal involved in an offense under paragraph (1) is any of the following, the person commits a misdemeanor of the second degree: (A) The Congressional Medal of Honor. (B) The Distinguished Service Cross. (C) A Navy Cross. (D) An Air Force Cross. (E) A Silver Star Medal. (F) A Purple Heart. (G) Any replacement or duplicate medal for medals listed under clauses (A), (B), (C), (D), (E) and (F). (ii) Each violation under this paragraph shall constitute a separate offense.
Rhode Island		
H5999 (11-69-1)	False representation of military status prohibited – Stolen valor.	(a) A person commits the crime of stolen valor if he or she knowingly, with the intent to obtain money, property, or another tangible benefit: (1) Fraudulently represents himself or herself to be an active member or veteran of the United States Navy, Army, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard, including armed forces reserves and National Guard through the unauthorized manufacture, sale, or use of military regalia or gear, including the wearing of military uniforms, or the use of falsified military identification; and obtains money, property, or another tangible benefit through such fraudulent representation. (2) Fraudulently represents himself or herself to be a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Silver Star, Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman Badge, Combat Action Badge, Combat Medical Badge, Combat Action Ribbon, or Air Force Combat Action Medal; and obtains money, property, or another tangible benefit through such fraudulent representation. (b) A person who commits the crime of stolen valor is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than one year or by a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or both. (c) Any movies collected pursuant to this chapter shall be forwarded to the office of the adjutant general to be allocated to the Rhode Island military family relief fund established pursuant to § 30-3-41.
South Carolina		
25-1-150	Unauthorized wearing of military insignia.	It is unlawful for a person to willfully wear the badge, button, insignia, or rosette of any military order or use any badge, button, insignia, or rosette to obtain aid, assistance, or other benefit or advantage, unless he is entitled to wear or use the military badge, button, insignia, or rosette. A person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined in the discretion of the court or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.
South Dakota		
None		

Tennessee		
58-1-118	Offenses involving improper use or display of military decorations, medals or badges.	(a) (1) It is an offense for a person to wear or display any decoration or medal authorized by congress for the armed forces of the United States, or any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of those forces, or the ribbon, button or rosette of any such badge, decoration or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof, with the intent to deceive or misrepresent to another that the person is authorized under regulations made pursuant to law to wear or display the badge, decoration or medal. (2) It is an offense for a person to falsely represent, whether verbally or in writing, that the person has been awarded any decoration or medal authorized by congress for the armed forces of the United States, any of the service medals or badges awarded to the members of those forces, the ribbon, button or rosette of any such badge, decoration or medal, or any colorable imitation of such item. (b) (1) It is an offense for a person to wear or display any decoration or medal authorized by the Tennessee military department, or the ribbon, button or rosette of any such decoration or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof, with the intent to deceive or misrepresent to another that the person is authorized under regulations made pursuant to law to wear or display any such decoration or medal. (2) It is an offense for a person to falsely represent, whether verbally or in writing, that the person has been awarded any decoration or medal authorized by the Tennessee military department, or the ribbon, button or rosette of any such decoration or medal, or any colorable imitation thereof. (c) A violation of subsection (a) or (b) is a Class B misdemeanor, except if a decoration or medal involved is a Congressional Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Silver Star, Purple Heart or any replacement or duplicate medal for such medal as authorized by law, then a violation of subsection (a) or (b) is a Class A misdemeanor.
58-1-119	Offense of impersonating a member of the United States armed forces	(a) It is an offense for a person to falsely impersonate or represent to another, whether by conduct, dress, verbally or in writing, that such person or a third party is or was a member of the armed forces of the United States with the intent to deceive or cause another to believe the representation when the person knows it to be false. (b) It is not a defense to prosecution under this section that the person making the false representation received no benefit or monetary thing or value from it. (c) This section shall not apply to wearing the dress of a member of the armed forces if done for the following purposes: (1) Instructional; (2) Law enforcement; (3) Theatrical, motion picture or entertainment; (4) Historical, ceremonial or educational; or (5) As a costume if worn in accordance with or not prohibited by regulations promulgated pursuant to law. (d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit prosecution under any other applicable statute if the person derives a

		benefit or thing of value from the impersonation. (e) Impersonation of a member of the armed forces is a Class B misdemeanor.
Texas		
32.54	Fraudulent or fictitious military record.	(a) In this section: (1) “Military record” means an enlistment record, occupation specialty, medal, award, decoration, or certification obtained by a person through the person’s service in the armed forces of the United States or the state military forces. (2) “State military forces” has the meaning assigned by Section 437.001, Government Code. (b) A person commits an offense if the person: (1) uses or claims to hold a military record that the person knows: (A) is fraudulent; (B) is fictitious or has otherwise not been granted or assigned to the person; or (C) has been revoked; and (2) uses or claims to hold that military record: (A) in a written or oral advertisement or other promotion of a business; or (B) with the intent to: (i) obtain priority in receiving services or resources under Subchapter G, Chapter 302, Labor Code; (ii) qualify for a veteran’s employment preference under Chapter 657, Government Code; (iii) obtain a license or certificate to practice a trade, profession, or occupation; (iv) obtain a promotion, compensation, or other benefit, or an increase in compensation or other benefit, in employment or in the practice of a trade, profession, or occupation; (v) obtain a benefit, service, or donation from another person; (vi) obtain admission to an educational program in this state; or (vii) gain a position in state government with authority over another person, regardless of whether the actor receives compensation for the position. (c) An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor. (d) If conduct that constitutes an offense under this section also constitutes an offense under any other law, the actor may be prosecuted under this section or the other law.
Utah		
76-9-706(2)	False representation of military award – False wearing or use of medal, name, title, insignia, ritual, or ceremony of a military related organization.	(1) As used in this section: (a) “Military related organization” means a public or private society, order, or organization that: (i) only accepts as a member, a person, or the relative of a person, who is: (A) a member of the military; or (B) an honorably discharged member of the military; and (ii) is organized for the purpose of: (A) recognizing or honoring a person for military service; (B) assisting a person described in Subsection (1)(a)(i) to lawfully associate with, or provide service with, other people described in Subsection (1)(a)(i); or (C) provide support for, or assistance to, a person described in Subsection (1)(a)(i). (b) “Service medal” means: (i) a congressional medal of honor, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 704(c)(2); (ii) a distinguished service cross, as defined in 10 U.S.C. 3742; (iii) a Navy cross, as defined in 10 U.S.C. 6242; (iv) an Air Force cross, as defined in 10 U.S.C. 8742; (v) a silver star, as defined in 10 U.S.C. 3746, 6244, or 8746; (vi) a bronze star, as defined in 10 U.S.C. 1133; (vii) a purple heart, as defined in 10 U.S.C. 1129; (viii) any decoration

		<p>or medal authorized by the Congress of the United States for the armed forces of the United States; (ix) any service medal or badge awarded to members of the armed forces of the United States; (x) any of the following Utah National Guard medals or ribbons: (A) medal of valor; (B) Utah cross; (C) joint medal of merit; (D) Utah medal of merit; (E) joint commendation medal; (F) commendation medal; (G) achievement ribbon; (H) joint staff service ribbon; (I) state partnership service ribbon; (J) service ribbon; (K) military funeral honors service ribbon; (L) emergency service ribbon; or (M) recruiting ribbon; (XI) any ribbon, button, or rosette for a decoration, medal, or badge described in Subsections (1)(b)(i) through (x); or (xii) an imitation of a decoration, medal, badge, ribbon, button, or rosette described in Subsections (1)(b)(i) through (xi). (2) Any person who intentionally makes a false representation, verbally or in writing, that the person has been awarded a service medal is guilty of an infraction. (3) Any person who wears, purchases, attempts to purchase, solicits for purchase, mails, ships, imports, exports, produces blank certificates of receipt for, manufactures, sells, attempts to sell, advertises for sale, trades, barter, or exchanges for anything of value a service medal, or any colorable imitation thereof, except when authorized by federal law, or under regulations made pursuant to federal law, with the intent to defraud, or with the intent to falsely represent that the person or another person has been awarded a service medal, is guilty of an infraction. (4) A person is guilty of an infraction if the person wears or uses a medal of a military related organization: (a) that the person is not entitled to wear or use; and (b) with the intent to defraud or with the intent to falsely represent that the person or another person has been awarded the medal. (5) A person is guilty of an infraction if the person uses the name, an officer title, an insignia, a ritual, or a ceremony of a military related organization: (a) that the person is not entitled to use; and (b) with the intent to defraud, or with the intent to falsely represent that the person or another person was or is a member, representative, or officer of the military related organization.</p>
Vermont		
None		
Virginia		
None		
Washington		
RCW 9A.60.045	Criminal impersonation in the second degree.	<p>(1) A person is guilty of criminal impersonation in the second degree if the person: (a)(i) Claims to be law enforcement officer or creates an impression that he or she is a law enforcement officer; and (ii) Under circumstances not amounting to criminal impersonation in the first degree, does an act with intent to convey the impression that he or she is acting in an official capacity and</p>

		a reasonable person would believe the person is a law enforcement officer; or (b) Falsely assumes the identity of a veteran or active duty member of the armed forces of the United States with intent to defraud for the purpose of personal gain or to facilitate any unlawful activity. (2) Criminal impersonation in the second degree is a gross misdemeanor.
West Virginia		
None		
Wisconsin		
30 (946.78)	False statement regarding military service.	(1) In this section: (a) “Military” means the U.S. armed forces, the state defense force, national guard of any state, or any other reserve component of the U.S. armed forces. (b) “Tangible benefit” includes financial remuneration, an effect on the outcome of a criminal or civil court proceeding, an effect on an election, and any benefit relating to service in the military that is provided by a federal, state, or local governmental unit or agency. (2) Except as provided in sub. (3), whoever knowingly and with the intent to receive a tangible benefit falsely claims any of the following is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor: (a) That he or she is or was a service member in the military. (b) That he or she has been awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor, a Distinguished Service Cross, a Navy Cross, an Air Force Cross, a Silver Star, a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart, a Combat Infantryman’s Badge, a Combat Action Badge, a Combat Medical Badge, a Combat Action Ribbon, a Combat Action Medal, or a Special Operations Identifier or Special Qualification or Skill identifier, as authorized by Congress or pursuant to federal law for the U.S. armed forces. (3) Any person violating sub. (2) with the intent to commit or aid or abet the commission of a crime other than a crime under this section is guilty of a Class H felony.
Wyoming		
None		

*Note Illinois statute is largely irrelevant to military impersonation or fraud, only a small section of it is relevant and this section has been added to the table, while the irrelevant sections have been excluded from the table. This only applies to Illinois.

APPENDIX I

Assorted international laws relevant to stolen valor

Code	Title	Text
United Kingdom		
Armed Forces Act of 2006 - 18	Making false records etc	(1) A person subject to service law commits an offence if – (a) he makes an official record, knowing that it is false in a material respect; and (b) he knows or has reasonable cause to believe that the record is official. (2) A person who adopts as his own a record made by another person is for the purposes of subsection (1) to be treated, as well as that other person, as making the record. (3) A person subject to service law commits an offence if – (a) with intent to deceive, he tampers with or suppresses an official document; and (b) he knows or has reasonable cause to believe that the document is official. (4) A person subject to service law commits an offence if—(a) with intent to deceive, he fails to make a record which he is under a duty to make; and (b) he knows or has reasonable cause to believe that the record would, if made, be official. (5) For the purposes of this section—(a) “record” means a document or an entry in a document; (b) “document” means anything in which information is recorded; (c) a record or document is official if it is or is likely to be made use of, in connection with the performance of his functions as such, by a person who holds office under the Crown or is in the service of the Crown. (6) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable to any punishment mentioned in the Table in section 164, but any sentence of imprisonment imposed in respect of the offence must not exceed two years.
Armed Forces Act of 2006 - 25	Misapplying or wasting public or service property	(1) A person subject to service law commits an offence if he misapplies or wastes any public or service property. (2) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable to any punishment mentioned in rows 2 to 12 of the Table in section 164.
Armed Forces Act of 2006 - 26	Sections 24 and 25: “public property” and “service property”	(1) This section applies for the purposes of sections 24 and 25. (2) “Public property” means property belonging to or held for the purposes of—(a) a department of the Government of the United Kingdom; (b) any part of the Scottish Administration; (c) a Northern Ireland department; or (d) the National Assembly for Wales. (3) “Service property” means property—(a) belonging to or used for the purposes of any of Her Majesty’s forces; (b) belonging to a Navy, Army and Air Force Institute; or (c) belonging to an association established, or having effect as if established, under section 110 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 (c. 14) (reserve associations).

Armed Forces Act of 2006 – Schedule 3	Civilians etc: Modifications of court martial sentencing powers	1. (1) In relation to a civilian offender, section 164 (punishments available to Court Martial) has effect as if subsections (4), (6) and (7) were omitted and as if for the Table there were substituted—(2) A person is a “civilian offender” for the purposes of this Part of this schedule if he has committed a service offence and—(a) he was a civilian when he committed the offence; (b) he is a civilian when sentenced for the offence; and (c) he remained a civilian throughout the period between committing the offence and being sentenced. (3) In sub-paragraph (2) “a civilian” means a person who is— (a) not a member of the regular forces; (b) not a member of the reserve forces; and (c) not liable to recall. (4) For the purposes of this paragraph a person is “liable to recall” if—(a) under section 65(1) of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 (c. 14) he is liable to be recalled for service; or (b) he is liable to be recalled as mentioned in section 35(1) of the Reserve Forces Act 1980 (c. 9). 2. For the purposes of determining the Court Martial’s powers when sentencing a civilian offender for an offence under section 42, section 42(3) (maximum penalties) has effect as if the reference to rows 5 to 12 were to rows 2 to 7.
Australia		
Defence Act 1903 – Sect 80A	Falsely representing to be returned soldier, sailor or airman	(1) A person commits an offence if: (a) the person represents himself or herself to be a returned soldier, sailor or airman; and (b) the representation is false. Penalty: 30 penalty units or imprisonment for 6 months, or both. (2) For the purpose of this section: (a) returned soldier means a person who has served abroad during any war as a member of any Military Force raised in Australia or in any other part of the British Empire, or as a member of the Military Forces of any Ally of Great Britain; (b) returned sailor means a person who has served abroad during any war as a member of any Naval Force raised in Australia or in any other part of the British Empire, or as a member of the Naval Forces of any Ally of Great Britain; and (c) returned airman means a person who has served abroad during any war as a member of any Air Force, air service or flying corps raised in Australia or in any other part of the British Empire or as a member of the air forces of any Ally of Great Britain.
Defence Act 1903 – Sect 80B	Improper use of service decorations	(1) A person commits an offence if: (a) the person wears a service decoration; and (b) the person is not the person on whom the decoration was conferred. Penalty: 30 penalty units or imprisonment for 6 months, or both. (2) Where the person upon whom a service decoration was conferred has died, it is not an offence against subsection (1) for a member of the family of that person to wear the service decoration if the member of the family does not represent himself or herself as being the person upon whom the decoration was conferred. (3) It is not an offence against subsection (1) for a person to wear a service decoration in the course of a dramatic or other visual representation (including such a representation to be televised) or in the making of a

		cinematographic film. (4) A person shall not falsely represent himself or herself as being the person upon whom a service decoration has been conferred. Penalty: 30 penalty units or imprisonment for 6 months, or both. (5) A person shall not deface or destroy, by melting or otherwise, a service decoration. Penalty: 60 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or both.
Defence Act 1903 – Sect 83	Unauthorized use, possession or supply of emblems or flags	(1) A person who is not a member of the Defence Force commits an offence if: (a) the person uses or wears a defence emblem or an emblem so nearly resembling a defence emblem as to be capable of being mistaken for such an emblem; and (b) the person does not have the written authority of the Minister, or of a person authorized in writing by the Minister, to do so. Penalty: \$200. (2) A person commits an offence if: (a) the person makes, supplies or offers to supply a defence emblem or an emblem so nearly resembling a defence emblem as to be capable of being mistaken for such an emblem; and (b) the person does not have the written authority of the Minister, or of a person authorized in writing by the Minister, to do so. Penalty: \$500. (3) A person commits an offence if: (a) the person flies or displays a defence flag; and (b) the person is not a member of the Defence Force acting in the course of his or her duties; and (c) the person does not have the written authority of the Minister, or of a person authorized in writing by the Minister, to do so. Penalty: \$200. (3A) An authority under subsection (1), (2), or (3) shall be subject to such limitations (if any) as are specified in the authority. (4) A person on whose behalf or at whose place of business an article is supplied or offered in contravention of this section, whether contrary to the instructions of that person or not, commits an offence, and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding \$200. (4A) An offence under subsection (4) is an offence of strict liability. (5) It is not an offence against this section for a person to use or wear a defence emblem or fly a defence flag in the course of a dramatic or other visual representation (including such a representation to be televised) or in the making of a cinematograph film. (6) Where an offence against this section has been committed, the court may, if it thinks fit, order the forfeiture of any emblem or flag in respect of which that offence was committed. (7) In this section: “defence emblem” means an emblem of the Defence Force or an arm of the Defence Force. “defence flag” means a flag of the Defence Force or an arm of the Defence Force. “emblem” includes a badge, a regimental or other similar distinctive mark, an armlet or an accoutrement. “flag” includes an ensign or a standard.
Defence Act 1903 – Sect 84	Penalty for bringing contempt on uniform	(1) Any person who wears any uniform of the Defence Force, or any dress having the appearance or bearing any of the regimental or other distinctive marks of any such uniform, in such a manner or under such circumstances as to be likely to bring contempt upon that uniform, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding \$200. (2) An offense under this section is an offence of strict liability.

Canada		
R.S.C., 1985, c.C-46 - 419	Unlawful use of military uniforms or certificates	Every one who without lawful authority, the proof of which lies on him, (a) wears a uniform of the Canadian Forces or any other naval, army or air force or a uniform that is so similar to the uniform of any of those forces that it is likely to be mistaken therefor, (b) wears a distinctive mark relating to wounds received or service performed in war, or a military medal, ribbon, badge, chevron or any decoration or order that is awarded for war services, or any imitation thereof, or any mark or device or thing that is likely to be mistaken for any such mark, medal, ribbon, badge, chevron, decoration or order, (c) has in his possession a certificate of discharge, certificate of release, statement of service or identity card from the Canadian Forces or any other naval, army or air force that has not been issued to and does not belong to him, or (d) has in his possession a commission or warrant or a certificate of discharge, certificate of release, statement of service or identity card, issued to an officer or a person in or who has been in the Canadian Forces or any other naval, army or air force, that contains any alteration that is not verified by the initials of the officer who issued it, or by the initials of an officer thereto lawfully authorized, is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.
Netherlands		
Art. 435a Sr		Hij die in het openbaar kledingstukken of opzichtige onderscheidingstekens draagt of voert, welke uitdrukking zijn van een bepaald staatkundig streven, wordt gestraft met hechtenis van ten hoogste twaalf dagen of geldboete van de tweede categorie.
Art. 435a Sr	English translation	He who in public wears articles of clothing or clearly visible insignia, which express a certain political aim, shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding twelve days or a fine of the second category.
Singapore		
Chapter 295, Part III, Section 30	Armed Forces Act – Personation and excess of authority	(1) Every person subject to military law who without authority holds himself out to have rank, status, appointment or assignment in the Singapore Armed Forces or who wears any military dress, insignia or badge whether of rank or otherwise which he is not authorized to wear shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction by a subordinate military court to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or any

		less punishment authorized by this Act. (2) Every person subject to military law who without authority does any act while holding himself out to have authority to do so shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction by a subordinate military court to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or any less punishment authorized by this Act.
--	--	--

APPENDIX J

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder DSM-5 criteria

- A. Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways: (1) Directly experiencing the traumatic event(s), (2) Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it occurred to others, (3) Learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend. In cases of actual or threatened death of a family member or friend, the event(s) must have been violent or accidental, (4) Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s) (e.g., first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse). Note: Criterion A4 does not apply to exposure through electronic media, television, movies, or pictures, unless this exposure is work related.
- B. Presence of one (or more) of the following intrusion symptoms associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning after the traumatic event(s) occurred: (1) Recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive distressing memories of the traumatic event(s). Note: In children older than 6 years, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the traumatic event(s) are expressed, (2) Recurrent distressing dreams in which the content and/or affect of the dream are related to the traumatic event(s). Note: In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognizable content, (3) Dissociative reactions (e.g., flashbacks) in which the individual feels or acts as if the traumatic event(s) were recurring. (Such reactions may occur on a continuum, with the most extreme expression being a complete loss of awareness of present surroundings.) Note: In children, trauma-specific reenactment may occur in play, (4) Intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event(s), (5) Marked physiological reactions to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event(s).

- C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning after the traumatic event(s) occurred, as evidenced by one or both of the following: (1) Avoidance of or efforts to avoid distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about or closely associated with the traumatic event(s), (2) Avoidance of or efforts to avoid external reminders (people, places, conversations, activities, objects, situations) that arouse distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about or closely associated with the traumatic event(s).
- D. Negative alterations in cognitions and mood associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning or worsening after the traumatic event(s) occurred, as evidenced by two (or more) of the following: (1) Inability to remember an important aspect of the traumatic event(s) (typically due to dissociative amnesia and not to other factors such as head injury, alcohol, or drugs), (2) Persistent and exaggerated negative beliefs or expectations about oneself, others, or the world (e.g., “I am bad,” “No one can be trusted,” “The world is completely dangerous,” “My whole nervous system is permanently ruined”), (3) Persistent, distorted cognitions about the cause or consequences of the traumatic event(s) that lead the individual to blame himself/herself or others, (4) Persistent negative emotional state (e.g., fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame), (5) Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities, (6) Feelings of detachment or estrangement from others, (7) Persistent inability to experience positive emotions (e.g., inability to experience happiness, satisfaction, or loving feelings).
- E. Marked alterations in arousal and reactivity associated with the traumatic event(s), beginning or worsening after the traumatic event(s) occurred, as evidenced by two (or more) of the following: (1) Irritable behavior and angry outbursts (with little or no provocation) typically expressed as verbal or physical aggression toward people or objects, (2) Reckless or self-destructive behavior, (3) Hypervigilance, (4) Exaggerated startle response, (5) Problems with concentration, (6) Sleep disturbance (e.g., difficulty falling or staying asleep or restless sleep).

- F. Duration of the disturbance (Criteria B, C, D, and E) is more than 1 month.
- G. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.
- H. The disturbance is not attributable to the physiological effects of a substance (e.g., medication, alcohol) or another medical condition.

Specify whether: **With dissociative symptoms:** The individual's symptoms meet the criteria for posttraumatic stress disorder, and in addition, in response to the stressor, the individual experiences persistent or recurrent symptoms of either of the following: (1) **Depersonalization:** Persistent or recurrent experiences of feeling detached from, and as if one were an outside observer of, one's mental processes or body (e.g., feeling as though one were in a dream; feeling a sense of unreality of self or body or of time moving slowly), (2) **Derealization:** Persistent or recurrent experiences of unreality of surroundings (e.g., the world around the individual is experienced as unreal, dreamlike, distant, or distorted). Note: To use this subtype, the dissociative symptoms must not be attributable to the physiological effects of a substance (e.g., blackouts, behavior during alcohol intoxication) or another medical condition (e.g., complex partial seizures).

Specify if: **With delayed expression:** If the full diagnostic criteria are not met until at least 6 months after the event (although the onset and expression of some symptoms may be immediate).

APPENDIX K

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

A pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following: (1) has a grandiose sense of self-importance (e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements) (2) is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love (3) believes that he or she is “special” and unique and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions) (4) requires excessive admiration (5) has a sense of entitlement, (i.e., unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations) (6) is interpersonally exploitative (i.e., takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends) (7) lacks empathy: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feelings and needs of others (8) is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her (9) shows arrogant, haughty behaviors or attitudes.

APPENDIX L

Antisocial Personality Disorder

- A. A pervasive pattern of disregard for and violation of the rights of others, occurring since age 15 years, as indicated by three (or more) of the following: (1) failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors, as indicated by repeatedly performing acts that are grounds for arrest (2) deceitfulness, as indicated by repeated lying, use of aliases, or conning of others for personal profit or pleasure (3) impulsivity or failure to plan ahead (4) irritability and aggressiveness, as indicated by repeated physical fights or assaults (5) reckless disregard for safety of self or others (6) consistent irresponsibility, as indicated by repeated failure to sustain consistent work behavior or honor financial obligations (7) lack of remorse, as indicated by being indifferent to or rationalizing having hurt, mistreated, or stolen from another.
- B. The individual is at least age 18 years.
- C. There is evidence of conduct disorder with onset before age 15 years.
- D. The occurrence of antisocial behavior is not exclusive during the course of schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

VITA

Elishewah Weisz

Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
College of Criminal Justice
Sam Houston State University
917.405.7264
elishewah@gmail.com

EDUCATION:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2016 | Ph.D. in Criminal Justice, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX, United States
<i>Dissertation title:</i> Stolen Valor: The people who commit military impersonation |
| 2012 | Masters of Arts in Forensic Psychology, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, NY, United States
<i>Thesis title:</i> Geographical Profiling: Spatial relationships between serial sexual offender anchor points and crime scene types and intermittent crimes in the series |
| 2006 | Masters of Science in Criminology & Clinical Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
<i>Direction:</i> life-course criminology
<i>Thesis title:</i> Do relations exist between the committed crime, the received sentence, the psychological state (diagnosis & treatment) & religion in this specific prison population? |
| 2004 | Bachelors of Science in Criminology & Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands |

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 2015 – 2016 | Principal Investigator for Dissertation Research
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
<u>Duties:</u> Data collection, literature study, creation of database, creation of survey, preparing IRB application, data entry, data analysis, and write up of the project
<u>Subject:</u> Stolen Valor |
| 2015 | Principal Investigator for Aggravated Assault and Homicide GIS |

- study
 Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Duties: Literature study, data analysis, write up of the project
Subject: Aggravated assault and homicide distance measurements
- 2014 – 2015 Principal Investigator for Gang membership in the military study
 Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Duties: Preparing IRB application, write up of the project, literature study
Subject: Gang membership and gang crimes in the U.S. military
- 2014 – 2015 Principal Investigator for aggravated assault study
 Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Duties: Literature study, data analysis, data cleaning, write up of the project
Subject: Aggravated assault and social disorganization theory
- 2013 - 2015 Research assistant for Dr. Roth
 Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX, USA
Duties: Data collection; Transcribing a two-hour interview
Subject: War journalism; Prison gangs; Prison rodeo; Murder memorabilia; Cargo theft
- 2013 Research assistant for Dr. Willard Oliver
 Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX, USA
Duties: data entry
Subject: Teacher arrests
- 2012 - 2013 Research assistant for Dr. William Wells
 Sam Houston State University/ Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT), Huntsville, TX, USA
Duties: reformatting questionnaires, literature review
Subject: Eyewitness reliability study

- 2012 Research assistant for Dr. William King
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX, USA
Duties: data entry; data collection
- 2012 PSY748 Empirical Crime Scene Analysis (Primary Researcher)
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, NY, Unites States
Advisor: Dr. C.G. Salfati
Subject: Abduction of minors for sexual purposes, live and dead victims: crime, offender, and victim characteristics
Duties: literature review, data collection, data entry, data analysis, and writing up the project.
*This class was part of a collaborative research project between the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Behavioral Science Unit and John Jay College of Criminal Justice.
- 2011 PSY739 Clinical Crime Scene Analysis (Class Group Project)
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, NY, Unites States
Advisors: Dr. L. Schlesinger & Dr. J. Jarvis
Subject: What leads to clearing a case by arrest or suicide?
Duties: creating a coding sheet for the project, data collection, data entry, data analysis, and writing up the project
*This class was part of a collaborative research project between the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Behavioral Science Unit and John Jay College of Criminal Justice.
- 2010- 2012 Research for MA thesis (Primary Researcher)
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, NY, United States
Advisor: Dr. Schlesinger
Subject: Geographical Profiling
Duties: creating a coding sheet, data collection, data entry, data analysis, and writing up the project.
*The thesis was conducted as part of a collaborative research project between the Federal Bureau of

Investigation, Behavioral Science Unit and John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

- 2010- 2012 Research assistant to Dr. S. Cohen (Research Assistant)
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, NY,
United States
Subject: Scientometric analysis of terrorism research
citations patterns: Extensive literature review and analysis
of scientific literature in the area of terrorism, with
particular emphasis on Israel-Palestine conflict.
Duties: data collection, data entry
- 2005 Master thesis criminology & clinical psychology
Magen Prison, Ramle, Israel & Vrije Universiteit
Amsterdam, Netherlands
Advisor: Dr. Y. Goclaw
Thesis title: Do relations exist between the committed
crime, the received sentence, the psychological state
(diagnosis & treatment) & religion in this specific prison
population?
Duties: creating the hypothesis, coding sheet, data
collection, data analysis, and writing up of the project
- 2004 Bachelor Thesis criminology
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands

PUBLICATIONS:

Manuscripts in Progress:

- Weisz, E., & Pyrooz, D.C.** Gangs Members, Criminal Offending and the United States Military
- Weisz, E.** False confessions
- Weisz, E.** Stolen Valor: Legal aspects of impersonating military personnel
- Weisz, E.** Homicide Statutes: A comprehensive Study of Homicide Statutes in the United States
- Weisz, E.** Spatial Analysis of Aggravated Assault and Homicide Cases Related to Crime Scene, Arrest, and Offender Residence Locations in Houston, Texas.
- Weisz, E.** Homicide Research Review: Definitions, Databases, Problems and Solutions.
- Weisz, E.** Aggravated assault: Offense, Offender, and Victim Characteristics in Houston.
- Weisz, E.** Karla Homolka. In F. Bernat & K. Frailing (Eds.) Encyclopedia of Women and

- 2015 Guest lecture – Cults
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: CRIJ4377 Special Topics – Serial Killers and Mass
murderers
Face-to-face, Fall semester
- 2015 Doctoral Teaching Fellow
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: CRIJ3363.03W Violent Offenders – Writing enhanced
Face-to-face, Fall semester
- 2015 Doctoral Teaching Fellow
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: CRIJ3363.03W Violent Offenders – Writing enhanced
Face-to-face, Summer semester
- 2015 Doctoral Teaching Fellow
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: CRIJ3363.01W Violent Offenders – Writing enhanced
Face-to-face, Summer semester
- 2015 Guest Lecture - Homicide
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: CRIJ 2362 Criminology
Face-to-face
- 2015 Teaching Assistant for Dr. M. Roth
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Classes: CRIJ4368 Global Organized Crime & CRIJ4377 Serial
Homicide & Mass Murder
- 2015 Doctoral Teaching Fellow
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: CRIJ 3363.04W Violent Offenders – Writing enhanced
Face-to-face, Spring semester
- 2014 Doctoral Teaching Fellow
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: CRIJ 3363.02 Violent Offenders
Face-to-face, Fall semester

- 2014 Teaching Assistant for Dr. M. Roth
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Classes: Global Organized Crime (Online, and face-to-face)
- 2014 Teaching Assistant for Dr. M. Roth
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: Global Organized Crime (Online)
- 2014 Guest lecture - Rape
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: Violent Offenders
- 2014 Teaching Assistant for Dr. K. Latz
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: Trauma and Crisis Intervention (face-to-face)
- 2013 Teaching Assistant for Dr. M. Roth
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: Global Terrorism & Homeland Security (face-to-face)
- 2013 Teaching Assistant for Dr. M. Roth
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Class: Global Organized Crime
- 2011 Served as a teaching assistant for one session of 'Theories of Personality' class.
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, NY.
Supervisor: Dr. S. Cohen.
- 2011 Served as a teaching assistant for one session of 'Psychology of Terrorism' class.
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, NY.
Supervisor: Dr. S. Cohen.

STATISTICAL AND COMPUTER EXPERIENCE:

Excel, SPSS, Word, PowerPoint, Microsoft MapPoint, ArcGIS

PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE:

2014 – 2016	Doctoral Teaching Fellowship at the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
2013 – 2014	Research and Teaching assistant ship at the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
2012 - 2013	Research assistantship at the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University/ Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT), Huntsville, TX, United States
2005	Forensic clinical psychology internship Magen prison, Ramle, Israel. Focusing on psycho-diagnostics and therapy.

REVIEW EXPERIENCE:

2012	Reviewer for the American Psychological Association convention program (2013), Division 41
2012	Reviewer for the Association of Psychological Science Student Research Awards

HONORS, AWARDS, AND NOMINATIONS:

2015	Travel grant for ACJS conference from Sam Houston State University at Huntsville, TX
2015	Nominated for the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award at Sam Houston State University at Huntsville, TX
2015	Nominated for the Graduate Research Exchange Award at Sam Houston State University at Huntsville, TX
2014	Travel grant for ASC conference from Sam Houston State University at Huntsville, TX
2014	Doctoral Teaching Fellowship at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, TX
2014	Travel grant for HRWG conference from Sam Houston State University at Huntsville, TX
2014	Travel grant for ACJS conference from Sam Houston State University at Huntsville, TX
2013	Summer Tuition Scholarship at Sam Houston State University at Huntsville, TX
2012	Travel grant for ASC conference from Sam Houston State University at Huntsville, TX

2012 -2014	Graduate Fellowship Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University at Huntsville, TX
2011	Graduate Dean's list at John Jay College of Criminal Justice at New York, NY
2011	Psi Chi- The International Honor Society in Psychology
2010 - 2011	Graduate Dean's list at John Jay College of Criminal Justice at New York, NY

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES:

2016, September 21	Webinar: From research to reward: A webinar on communicating social science research by COSSA (Consortium of Social Science Associations)
2016, August 18	Webinar: The abuse of E-cigarettes, their impact on criminal justice by National institute of Justice and RTI International
2016, July 14	Webinar: New paradigm fingerprint reporting W/O individualization by National Institute of Justice and RTI International
2016, May 26	Webinar: What could happen when prosecutors don't follow the rules by National Institute of Justice and RTI International
2016, May 18	Webinar: Basics of microbiology as applied to microbial forensics by National Institute of Justice and RTI International
2016, May 4	Webinar: Learning about microbial forensics by National Institute of Justice and RTI International
2016, April 7	SPSSI and APAGS webinar: An introduction to social network analysis in psychology with Joanna Weill
2016, February 18	ASCLD webinar: DNA discipline by National Institute of Justice and RTI International
2016, February 11	ASCLD webinar: Latent prints by National Institute of Justice and RTI International
2016, February 4	ASCLD webinar: Digital multimedia by National Institute of Justice and RTI International
2016, January 28	ASCLD webinar: Controlled substances by National Institute of Justice and RTI International
2015, April 21	Professional Development – The art of teaching: Engaging with discussion (part 2)
2015, April 20	Professional Development – The art of teaching: Exams, Evaluation, and Feedback
2015, March 24	Professional Development – The art of teaching: Engaging with discussion (part 1)
2015, March 24	Understanding IDEA workshop

2015, February 17	The art of teaching: Teaching the critical skills
2015, January 26	Shots fired: When lightning strikes
2014	Online basic Geographic Information Systems (GIS) class, New Urban Research
2014	Attended the 3 rd Annual SHSU Online Teaching + Learning Conference
2013, October 4	Security Awareness Training – Basic Course by External Training at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
2013, September 2	Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse Curriculum Course at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
2013, Spring	Professional Development, <u>Dynamic Learning</u> course by The Professional and Academic Center for Excellence & The Department of Foreign Languages at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
2013, Spring	Professional Development, <u>Planning the Work</u> course by The Professional and Academic Center for Excellence & The Department of Foreign Languages at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
2012, Fall	Professional Development, <u>Starting out Right</u> course by The Professional and Academic Center for Excellence & The Department of Foreign Languages at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
2012, October 14	CITI Human Research course
2012, September 7	Equal Employment Opportunity Training at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
2011, August 5	APA CE course- 123 A Scientific Approach to Homicide Profiling and Consultation CE credits: 7
2011, July 25 th - 29 th	Forensic Taphonomy Course at the Forensic Anthropology Center, The University of Tennessee
2010, October 14	CITI Human Research course
2010, September 16	Offender Profiling: Psychology Contributions to Crime Scene Analysis NJI- RTI
2010, August 13	APA CE course- 131 Forensic Child Sexual Abuse Evaluations: Research and Practice; CE credits: 7
2010, August 12	APA CE course- 105 A Developmental Understanding for Assessing and Treating Violent Individuals; CE Credits: 7
2010, July 5 th – 9 th	Human Identification Course: Laboratory Methods at the Forensic Anthropology Center, The University of Tennessee

- 2008, July 16 Logo Certificate (A certificate showing I have all the prerequisites to be accepted into a general psychologist program after graduating with a master degree.)
- 2008, March 16 Evidence of Psychodiagnostic skills (A certificate showing I have taken enough psychodiagnostic courses, which is one of the pre requisites to be accepted into a general psychologist program after graduating with a master degree.)

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION:

- 2016 Volunteered at Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences conference
Employment Exchange at Denver, CO
- 2013 Volunteered at Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences conference
in Dallas, TX

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

American Psychological Association (APA) since 2008
 Nederlands Instituut van Psychologen (NIP) since 2008
 American Society of Criminology (ASC) since 2011
 American Psychology – Law Society (AP-LS) since 2011
 Association of Psychological Science (APS) since 2011
 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) since 2012
 Homicide Research Working Group (HRWG) since 2014

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

Stolen valor
 Homicide
 Extraordinary crimes
 Serial sexual homicide
 Child abduction
 Geographical profiling
 Investigative processes
 Policing